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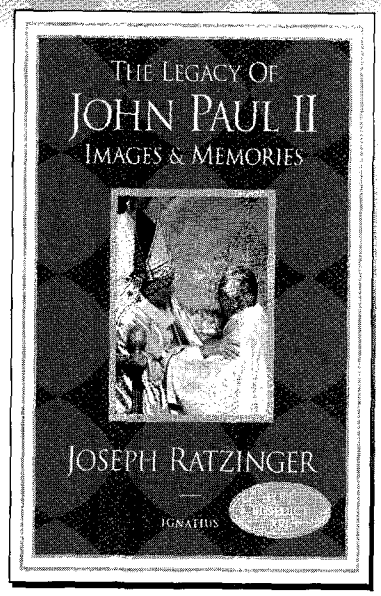

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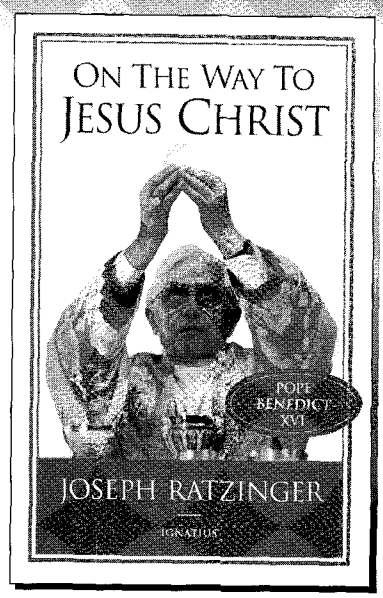

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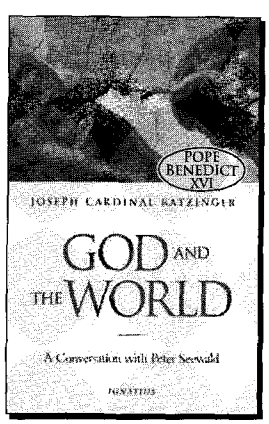

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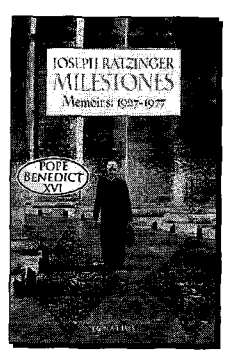

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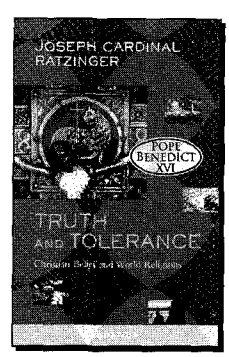

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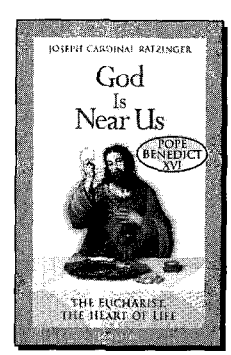

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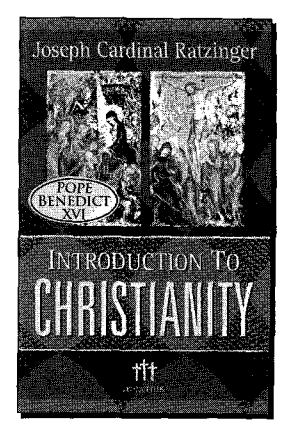

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FIRST THINGS

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Correspondence

Fusion or Confusion?

Joseph Bottum's intelligent and clever essay on "The New Fusionism" (June/July) offers a possible hypothesis, but as the last surviving Protestant Democrat on the editorial boards of First Things, I am bound to see things a little differently. I cannot accept the Republican party as the leader of the new moralism. It pays selective attention to the "life issues," while ignoring too much else of moral import. The Bush administration's "preferential option for the rich," in all its manifestations, is not morally defensible, nor is the widespread support for the death penalty among Republican stalwarts. Meanwhile, the Republican Senate majority was built solidly on the infamous "Southern strategy," whose moral implications are painful. Republican protestations of moral sentiments are all too often purely for the sake of votes and not from conviction. Hypocrisy is the right word.

Nor can one seriously claim that the Democrats, on the other side, are the locus of moral relativism. That is not a very convincing way to describe half the electorate. It is worth noting that liberal Massachusetts, the quintessential blue state, has the lowest divorce rate in the nation, while Wyoming, Dick Cheney's home state, a quintessential red state, has the third highest. Painting your opponents roundly as immoral, against what the "vast majority" of Americans want, as the Republicans do, is just wild political exaggeration.

As for reading the electoral tea leaves to yield an emerging fusion which produces an electoral shift, the formation of a new majority is solemnly announced from time to time, and either it crumbles soon enough or is shown to be wishful thinking in the first place. Republicans now have a way of crowing that "the American people" elected them to do whatever they now propose to do, finding an electoral "mandate" in 51 percent. I don't think we should take that very seriously as anything more than political boilerplate. The winning coalition, I think, will last only until the next economic downturn.

My principal reason for voting for Kerry is the gross economic incompetence of the Bush administration, almost shockingly wrong-headed, risking the American future. I have more mixed feelings about the Bush foreign policy, but on the whole I judge that severely wanting also. Interventionism is not the issue, but how it is carried out: the degree and manner of unilateralism involved. Morally driven foreign policy is in our tradition (thought not always in our practice), and it has served us well, earning us a "decent respect" from "the opinions of mankind." But the maladroit Bush administration has actually managed to squander our reputation for virtue, and that will hurt us badly in the long run.

In sum, there are many, many ethical reasons for opposing this administration. It is absolutely not morality ascendant.

Thomas Derr
Northampton, Massachusetts

Joseph Bottum's "New Fusionism" is certainly the best account I have read about both the history of the fusion between social conservatism and conservative "internationalism," and the best representation of how smart social conservatives and smart neoconservatives view their political project and the political landscape in which it has unfolded.

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Nonetheless, may I offer two criticisms from someone who is a fairly conventional European-style centrist social democrat but who, in the context of First Things or the *Weekly Standard*, would obviously be viewed as a leftist?

The first is that Bottum's account does not accurately describe the debate between liberals and conservatives on terrorism (as in my case, I would submit to you that only in the United States, and nowhere else in the world, could Nick Kristof be described as a "leftist"). Bottum recapitulates, without any acknowledgment that there are other views, the administration's argument, which is that the war in Iraq is part of the war on terror. The advantage to this argument is, obviously, that one can "moralize" the war on terrorism—particularly after the WMD justifications wilted and were replaced by human-rights justifications.

But as Bottum knows as well as I do, there is a critique of the Iraq war—it has been made and continues to be made eloquently by both Richard Clarke and Michael Scheuer, much as (it is rumored) they otherwise loathe each other—that the war in Iraq was and is a distraction from the war on terror.

The corollary to this argument is that terrorism poses an existential threat to U.S. security and the fight against it need not engage in what Bottum calls the project of building international democracy. Bottum's statement that "if you are serious about the war on terror, you will soon discover that you are mingling with those who are fighting against abortion" cannot be right—unless, that is, you think people like Clarke and Scheuer are not serious: something I cannot believe he really thinks, whatever other disagreements he may have with either man.

The second point is that I think Bottum grossly exaggerates what he calls America's regained "sense of national purpose" after September 11. That activists, including those on the pro-life side, have been energized, is true, obviously. But the polling data I've seen suggests dwindling support for the Iraq war, hostility to the moves on behalf of keeping Terry Schiavo on life support, and continued support both for contraception among American Catholics and legalized abortion among the American public at large.

Bottum and I probably differ on both issues, but I would be the first to concede that even if I am right about the polls, they establish nothing about the rights or wrongs of Iraq, Schiavo, or *Roe v. Wade*. Still, it seems odd that this data and its implications for Bottum's argument are not reflected at all in his piece's concluding paragraph.

David Rieff
New York, New York

In "The New Fusionism" we pro-life street-fighters are admonished that we should be the fire in the belly for the cause of the neoconservatives. We're told that, in our support of a vague "belief in the great American experiment," a possible byproduct could be a revitalization of the pro-life cause. Why not just call it "Seamless Garment"? The Democrats told us the same thing in the 1970s and 1980s via their cheerleaders, many of whom were members of our own clergy: "Support our cause (you stupid pro-life street-fighters) by not talking about abortion until we redistribute all wealth, surrender our defenses to our socialist brothers in Moscow, free all criminals and then, maybe, peace and justice will find a way to address the abortion issue." Now the Republican seamless-garment scheme directs us: "Support our tax break (you stupid pro-life street-fighters) and go stealth on the abortion issue until you've got a Republican in every electable position from president to dogcatcher and then, maybe, some sort of pro-life revitalization will take place." Slowly but surely the Republicans are losing us for good with their lack of initiatives to save babies. Just for a start, might the Republicans who control Congress simply find a way *not* to fund Planned Parenthood for once? Throw us just one bone, for crying out loud, if your languid Wilsonian cause is lacking fire in its belly.

Pat Sullivan
Poway, California

Joseph Bottum manages to reveal, contrary to his own intentions, that contemporary American conservatism is indeed "a crack-up waiting to happen." Somehow, he tells us, opposition to abortion and support for an "activist, interventionist, and moralist foreign policy for the United States"—in blunter language, American imperialism—stand or fall together. Not logically, not psychologically, but by some political imperative that forces all issues into a Left-Right grid, at whatever cost to intellectual and moral integrity. The assumption that everyone who opposes the standard Right agenda is somehow morally soft will not withstand the gentlest scrutiny. Midge Decter says that eventually we all have to join the side we are on. But what side is that? Why not sign on to a seamless garment culture of life that opposes both abortion and what diplomats call "wars of choice"? No one has ever accused John Paul II of moral relativism or social defeatism.

Philip E. Devine
Providence College
Providence, Rhode Island

The estimable Joseph Bottum proposes a close alliance between social conservatives, specifically the pro-life movement, and advocates of a neoconservative foreign policy in the fullest sense—the war on terror, the war in Iraq, regime change, democratization, nation building, and, presumably, preemptive war. A fair reading of his "New Fusionism" indicates

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he is going beyond mere description in characterizing the current coalition within the Republican party. Rather, he aims to shape a synergistic fusion of these groups based on a fundamental understanding of inalienable human rights as articulated in the Declaration of Independence.

Spurning traditional definitions of conservatism, Bottum argues for a "new moralism" flowing from the sense of national purpose regained by forceful response to the attack of September 11. This joining together of two variants of conservatism "could help summon the will to halt the slaughter of a million unborn children a year. And the energy of the pro-life fight—the fundamental moral cause of our time—may revitalize belief in the great American experiment."

This line of reasoning underestimates the long-term staying power of the right-to-life movement and puts at risk its potential, over time, to transform American society. It effectively writes off anyone who might be open to the claims of the humanity of the unborn, or any human subject, but still resists the broad claims of a neoconservatism as it pertains to the use of force abroad to achieve a given set of national objectives. It is the conservative version of the liberal "seamless garment" concept and "consistent ethic of life" which elevated prudential matters of policy—economics, welfare, war, and peace—to the same level of concern as inherently immoral acts such as abortion or euthanasia.

This is not to say that all pro-lifers disagree with the neoconservative agenda for national and homeland security. Some do. Some don't. Some pick and choose. Indeed, they often work side by side with them, laboring in the Republican vineyards and elsewhere, given their banishment from the Democratic party and the warm welcome they received from Ronald Reagan in the 1976 Republican presidential primaries.

Yet the fact remains that pro-lifers will only transform the culture of death when they effectively engage blue states as well as red states, Democrats as well as Republicans, doves as well as hawks. Assume that Republican presidents appoint enough Supreme Court justices to reverse *Roe v. Wade*. What happens next? The debate moves to the state level. While further GOP gains in red states are entirely possible, even likely, there is no compelling reason for pro-lifers to tie their fortunes to the philosophic or political claims of foreign-policy neoconservatives.

In the mid-1970s, when Cardinal Carberry of the archdiocese of St. Louis demonstrated real leadership by organizing one of the first pro-life committees in the country, the predominant number of the rank and file volunteers came from the Labor Democrat community. Many became Reagan Democrats, and then Republicans. But many did not.

This was common throughout America at the time. The point is that the future configuration of the pro-life constituency may shift in the decades ahead. To foreclose the opportunity of reaching out to, for instance, foreign policy liberals or paleoconservative isolationists makes no sense at all—at least from the perspective of the right-to-life movement.

In the *Los Angeles Times* Max Boot, a prominent neoconservative, questioned social conservatives' opposition to women in combat and gays in the military: "Are they more concerned about winning culture wars at home or winning the war on terrorism abroad?" Clearly, this neoconservative has a different set of priorities than his social-conservative allies. Pro-life advocates have expanded their political influence for more than three decades by maintaining a tight focus on their core issues: abortion, euthanasia, and now stem-cell research. Polls consistently show that younger citizens are responding positively to arguments for the humanity of the unborn. The right-to-life movement has always taken the position of "No enemies on the Left or Right." God willing, may that ever be so, too.

G. Tracy Mehan III
Vienna, Virginia

After reading "The New Fusionism," I was bothered by Joseph Bottum's marriage of the pro-life impulse with the impulse for an active and moral U.S. foreign policy.

Bottum, like so many other Catholic neoconservatives, continues to defend America's decision for preemptive war with Iraq in defiance of the Vatican's clear opposition to that war. By taking such a position, I believe that Catholics such as Bottum risk a destructive reversal of the original purpose of church-state separation.

Throughout history, loyal churchmen have invoked this doctrine in order to protect the church from the state; not the other way around. Some examples of these loyal churchmen would be St. Ambrose of Milan who stood up to the Roman Emperor Theodosius in A.D. 390, or of Pope St. Gregory VII who took on the renegade King Henry IV of Germany in 1075. A radical exception to these men were the French clergy of the late seventeenth century who invoked this doctrine as a means of protecting the French state from the church—the historical embarrassment of French Gallicanism.

It is disturbing that the pro-war arguments of Catholic neoconservatives today resemble those of the Gallican heretics in the Four Gallican Articles of 1682. Who is in fundamental need of protection from whom? I find it hard to make a convincing argument that the state (in its current condition) is in need of protection from the Church. It seems far more plausible that the opposite is the case. And where do our fundamental loyalties as Catholics lie? The French

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clergy found out the hard way when they abandoned their naive silliness as the guns of the French Revolution drove them back into the arms of the Roman pontiff. Let's hope that today's Catholic neoconservatives such as Bottum don't find themselves in a similar position someday.

Adam DeMuro
Naperville, Illinois

In "The New Fusionism," Joseph Bottum suggests that economic issues like "tax reform and social security and the balanced budget" are not particularly important for holding the new conservative coalition together because these issues "do not bear hard on . . . the deep changes that might reawaken and remoralize the nation." If these issues are treated superficially, as they usually are, Bottum is surely correct. But viewed from a proper historical perspective, these economic issues could play a decisive role in the revitalization and "preservation of the sacred fire of liberty" (as George Washington put it).

A simple question will suffice to illustrate: What would our Founding Fathers say about these three economic issues? While tinkering with the tax code is a matter of indifference, throwing off the ninety-two-year-old federal income tax and replacing it with a consumption tax—specifically, with a federal retail sales tax—is in perfect harmony with the Founders' understanding of liberty. As Publius points out in the *Federalist Papers*, "It is a signal advantage of taxes on articles of consumption that they contain in their own nature a security against excess"—namely, that regardless of how much you earn, if you choose not to spend your money on that particular article of consumption, you do not pay that tax.

The sacrosanct principle of Social Security (which the Bush administration is trying to rescue from impending bankruptcy) is that the federal government has to save our money for us. Even if most of us are content with this arrangement, the Founders most certainly would be appalled. Balanced budget? The Founders, too, had trouble with that. But today, as budget deficits accumulate into a gigantic national debt, a lonely voice crying out in the desert for a balanced budget is the only faint warning that remains against the growing threat of an unbounded, all-powerful central government.

In short, Bottum may be "misunderestimating" the potential fusing effects of these economic issues—considered from the perspective of the Founding Fathers—as the new coalition of conservatives begins to rediscover the foundational principles of the American experiment.

T. Dan Tolleson
Houston, Texas

Joseph Bottum's essay on fusionism seriously discounts the degree to which a fundamental distrust of Israel and of American Jewish support of Israel determines the animus of the paleoconservative ideologues—Pat Buchanan, for example, and Alexander Cockburn of *Counterpunch*—have openly declared those labeled most prominently as neoconservatives within the United States government and their associates (Paul Wolfowitz, William Kristol, etc.) as being fifth-column traitors. We must also note, however, the great disparity between the overly-romanticized view of Israel held by "Christian Zionists" and the reality of a country that is, despite its obviously religious aspects, secular.

Paul Freedman
Falls Church, Virginia

Joseph Bottum replies:

My thanks to all who wrote about my essay on the new fusionism. The topic generated far more correspondence than we could publish, and each letter printed here represents many others that made similar arguments.

Thomas Derr, a member of the First Things advisory board, objects that Republicans are no more eternal emblems of virtue than Democrats are of vice. The well-known writer David Rieff remarks on the sleight-of-rhetoric by which the foreign-policy goal of fighting terrorism is elided into the war against Saddam Hussein. Pat Sullivan mocks the new fusionism as merely the contemporary Republican version of the Democrats' old "seamless-garment" trick for downplaying abortion, while Philip Devine longs for a return of that seamless garment. G. Tracy Mehan thinks I am putting the pro-life movement at risk, while Adam DeMuro thinks I am risking the Catholic Church in America. T. Dan Tolleson thinks—as did many, many correspondents—that economic issues are far more central to the American experiment than I allow.

Can I make clear to all our correspondents that the Republican association with the causes of a strong, morally motivated foreign policy and the fight against abortion is a historical accident, and one I don't particularly care about? If the Democrats were the pro-life party, I would vote for them reluctantly. If they were *both* the pro-life and the serious foreign-policy party, I would vote for them cheerfully.

Perhaps this marks, as Tolleson thinks, my surrender of the economic issues, although I remind my friend Tom Derr that a majority of the nation's billionaires and multi-millionaires are now Democrats, while the Republicans have carried huge majorities of the nation's rural poor in the last three elections, which suggests something about how poorly Depression-era rhetoric of "rich Republicans" fits our current political landscape. But the particular party identification is beside the point I wanted to make. The demoralization of the society, from the 1970s on, gave us *both* millions dead in the abortion slaughter and millions dead in the

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international genocides that Henry Kissinger's hard realism and Jimmy Carter's soft détente alike prevented us from halting. The morally serious have to be concerned about both these effects.

Many correspondents took Pat Sullivan's view that the new fusionism is merely the return of the seamless-garment doctrine. What this ignores is that abortion is *central* to new fusionism, and if the Republicans understood the fusion, they would increase their opposition to abortion. The seamless-garment notion was an attempt to hide abortion, and Philip Devine got the seamless-garment candidate he seems to want in John Kerry, a Catholic endorsed by the abortion lobby.

David Rieff makes an important point, however, about how the invasion of Iraq may not fit into the moral foreign policy I desire. I was, as he suggests, doing a little rhetorical elision—but not to trick, merely to keep an already overlong essay from getting even longer.

The short answer to Rieff is that I do defend the war against Hussein, but the reasons given for the war by the White House are not those I would give. And the portions of my essay reporting the *fact* of the new fusionism (rather than the portions defending it as intellectually plausible) were meant to document the reality I found over and over in Washington: The pro-life thinkers, writers, and activists were joining with the foreign-policy moralists. When I went to meetings of the neoconservatives, the social conservatives were there. If that isn't fusionism, what is it?

Orthodox CPE

I enjoyed Philip Turner's rant about the Episcopal Church in the United States ("An Unworkable Theology," June/July). I enjoyed it *until* he dragged Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) out behind the woodshed for a whipping. Turner uses CPE as a major example of the Episcopal Church's adoption of "the doctrine of radical inclusion," which seems to be about what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace"—forgiveness without repentance.

As a CPE supervisor I do not recognize Turner's description of our methods. He described a process in which people are called "clients" and the chaplain-interns "counselors," and the pastoral relationship is defined by "transference and counter-transference." Turner declares that "the dominant assumption" throughout CPE is that "clients have, within themselves, the answer to their perplexities and conflicts." "Successful adjustment," he claims, is the goal of pastoral care purveyed by CPE.

In fact, CPE students today are learning that there is no successful adjustment to suffering and to dying. CPE students are taught to assist the suffering in accessing their religious and spiritual resources, but often those resources are low or nonexistent because of the person's own neglect or the poor preparation for suffering and dying they have received from their congregations. "Unconditional positive regard" as a guiding philosophy died along with Carl Rogers.

I suppose we could argue about what good pastoral care, from representatives of Jesus Christ, should look like. I want my students to respect the sufferer, to be pastoral caregivers who give the sufferer attention unlike other attention they receive in hospitals. I think Turner is wrong about the hospital not being a place where people wrestle with faith, forgiveness, repentance, and amendment of life. CPE is training seminarians and clergy to help people explore these issues of life and death. When students preach to suffering people, I cringe. When they are purveyors of cheap hope, I am aghast. Turner protests that God is "depicted as an accepting presence" in CPE. Yet God also arrives through CPE in many other images: Creator, Father, Comforter, Son, Redeemer, and even as a hen watching over her chicks.

Theology is a much larger part of CPE than Turner believes. As a member of CPE national and regional certification committees over the last fifteen years, I have seen candidates denied certification because they could not explicate a doctrine of sin and evil in relation to their work as pastoral educators.

If you want to see an example of the kind of theology successful CPE supervisory candidates are writing, take a look at the Lutheran Theology of Angelika Zollfranke in the 2005 annual *Supervision and Training for Ministry*.

You could take CPE to task for other failings, but I don't believe we are the cause or the representative of the theological malaise in the Episcopal Church today.

The Rev. Paul D. Steinke
Bellevue Hospital Center
New York, New York

Physical Abstraction

As a physicist, I must take issue with Timothy George's statement that "by itself, abstraction will always lead us away from what is truly real" ("The Pattern of Christian Truth," June/July). I believe that any honest line of inquiry, pursued conscientiously, with loving regard for its subject, will point toward God. I support this contention with an example:

Steven Weinberg (co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979) is an atheist who has been quoted as saying that the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless. And yet in his textbook, *The Quantum Theory of Fields*, he states, "It is natural to identify the states of a specific particle type with the components of a representation of the inhomogeneous Lorentz group, which is irreducible."

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The inhomogeneous Lorentz group is a collection of transformations of an object or an observer in space and time. These transformations are rotations (spinning around), translations (standing at different places), and boosts (which are shifts to a frame of reference that is moving at a high, but constant, velocity). The Lorentz group is significant in that equations of both relativity and electromagnetism are invariant under its transformations. There are a number of mathematical ways to represent the Lorentz group. Any set of symbols and rules to manipulate them will do, provided they behave the same way the Lorentz group does. Those representations that cannot be decomposed into subgroups that also represent the Lorentz group are said to be *irreducible*.

What we have here, then, is the statement that representations of the invariance group of relativity are the platonic forms of the basic constituents of all presently understood matter and energy in the universe. To me, if not to Weinberg, this immediately raises the question: "In Whose mind can these forms give rise to reality?" This is probably as close as theoretical physics has ever come to postulating the existence of God, even though that was not the author's intention. I do not mean to imply that George's statement is incorrect—merely that it does not stand without some qualification.

J.A.H. Futterman
Lawrence Livermore Laboratory
Livermore, California

Timothy George replies:

I take J.A.H. Futterman's point as a friendly corrective to my comment about abstraction. I did not say, however, that abstraction was useless but merely that it was insufficient to yield more than a segmented view of reality. Could it be that Futterman infers from his study of the Lorentz group something Steven Weinberg has missed not because he is more prescient, nor because the abstraction by itself compels such a conclusion, but rather because he approaches this data with a different pre-understanding? As a Christian, I believe, of course, that God has revealed himself in the created order but I also believe that our perception of such *vestigia* is severely limited by our fallenness and finitude.

The French physicist Roland Omnes is fond of quoting Aristotle: "Like night birds blinded by the glare of the sun, such is the behavior of the eyes of our mind when they stare at the most luminous facts." Such blindness is removed only by illumination, and such illumination is received only by grace.

The Lesson of Infertility

I found Eric Cohen's "A Jewish-Catholic Bioethics" (June/July) most instructive. I was moved by Cohen's commendation to the Catholic Church for its "witness in defense of human life" and his admonition that Jews should "stand more humbly before the mystery of new life." Such statements are powerful in the continuing dialogue about the use of embryos for stem-cell research. Cohen also made the clear connection between the burgeoning practice of in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and the resulting "spare" embryos unclaimed and sitting in freezers in IVF clinics. I have often wondered why Catholics did not speak out more strongly against IVF decades ago. Without the growing supply of hundreds of thousands of "spare embryos," the scientific field might now be focusing on more licit sources of stem cells for research: from adult tissue, umbilical cords, and placenta tissue.

It was especially helpful to learn more about the deep-rooted Jewish view of the pathos of infertility and the special meaning of procreation within Judaism: the significance of birth over baptism in the passing of Judaism through generations shed new light on why IVF is permissible in all branches of Judaism. I was troubled, however, with Cohen's reference to "particularistic ethics" and his hint at some moral justification for IVF. I certainly empathize with women struggling to have children, since cancer and other illnesses have denied me the joy of motherhood. I am blessed today with wonderful nieces and nephews spanning two generations. But I have sought comfort from my faith, family, and friends. I also gleaned meaningful insights from an important Church teaching that "children are a gift, not a right." In working through my own painful experience of infertility, I have come to embrace my Catholic faith more deeply, to be open to God's invitation to be of service to others through my unique charisms—perhaps even to under-

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stand more profoundly the meaning of sacrifice in one's journey to holiness and salvation.

Susan Emily Jordan
Oak Park, Illinois

In Defense of Rabbi Lapin

Richard John Neuhaus suggests ("Polite Gentiles," June/July) that Rabbi Daniel Lapin may have overreacted when he accused fellow Jews of anti-Semitism. One ventures to suggest that Neuhaus himself may have underreacted.

Lapin decries the "anti-Semitism perpetrated by Jews rather than non-Jews," citing the famously vulgar likes of Howard Stern, Jerry Springer, and Dr. Ruth, and especially a recent blockbuster film (the vulgarly suggestive title of which he refuses to name) starring Barbra Streisand and Dustin Hoffman. He marvels that Jewish leaders and organizations can consider Mel Gibson's *The Passion* defamatory (even though "polls show increased regard for Jews among the film's audiences") while they ignore culture "trashers" who "possess Jewish names and proudly proclaim their Jewish identity."

Neuhaus agrees—for the most part. "Rabbi Lapin makes serious charges," he says, "which, although directed against his fellow Jews, should be taken seriously also by Christians." But he also thinks perhaps that Lapin "too readily . . . describes as self-defamation" mere good-natured self-deprecation: "Some of the films that concern [Rabbi Lapin] are aimed at mainly non-Jewish audiences, inviting them to join in the mainly good-spirited laughter at these crazy Jews." He suspects that this "usually humorous, if unflattering, depiction of Jews in popular entertainment" may even contribute "to making ours a society so friendly to Jews."

Perhaps I am overreacting, but I read Lapin rather differently. Lapin has no quarrel with Jews poking fun at themselves, nor, I suppose, would he disagree that a little self-deprecation could help break down barriers. The problem, however, in Lapin's words, is that "we Jews routinely depict ourselves in repugnant caricatures of people you'd want nothing to do with in real life." Worse still, in doing so, the debasers trample their Jewish legacy in mire: "Jews used to be known for having endowed the world with the notion of sexual restraint and modesty. Judaism is now being defamed by Jews."

Which prompts us to ask what it means to say that a film Lapin calls a "horrible excrescence" might signal (as Neuhaus suggests) "a Jewish sense of security in this mainly non-Jewish society?" Are we to reduce Gentile-Jewish relations to the proposition that "everyone is equal in the gutter?" Shock jocks and raunchy movies with Jewish pedigrees do not merely foster cultural decay, they deny their God-given Jewish identity. Christians should take seriously Lapin's charges.

C. Richard Wells
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Rapid City, South Dakota

Milgram and Evil

I maintain that Stanley Milgram did much more than a simple service for us, as Richard John Neuhaus claims ("While We're At It," June/July).

In his haunting, though brief, *cinéma verité* film *Obedience*, Milgram left us a classic horror film that fully reveals the banality of evil which is a trademark of modernity. The film encapsulates many of the essential elements of modernity—technology, organizational imperatives, and professional expertise—and uncannily demonstrates how any of us might be seduced, thereby, into unreflective evil behavior.

In Milgram's studies, ordinary men and women willingly complied with authoritative commands to shock the supposed victim. In showing the film to many different groups, I have found most viewers respond that they too would have kept shocking the victim.

The great tragedy of Milgram's legacy is that we have all dropped the ball he handed us. Because his work was thought by academics to be "unethical" (despite the fact that most of his subjects, in postmortems, stated that they had learned something very important about themselves) and because he exposed the "delusion of the morally innocent and self-directed rational self," we have largely ignored Milgram's probings into the seamy consequences of modernity.

Donald K. Wilson
Wakefield, Rhode Island

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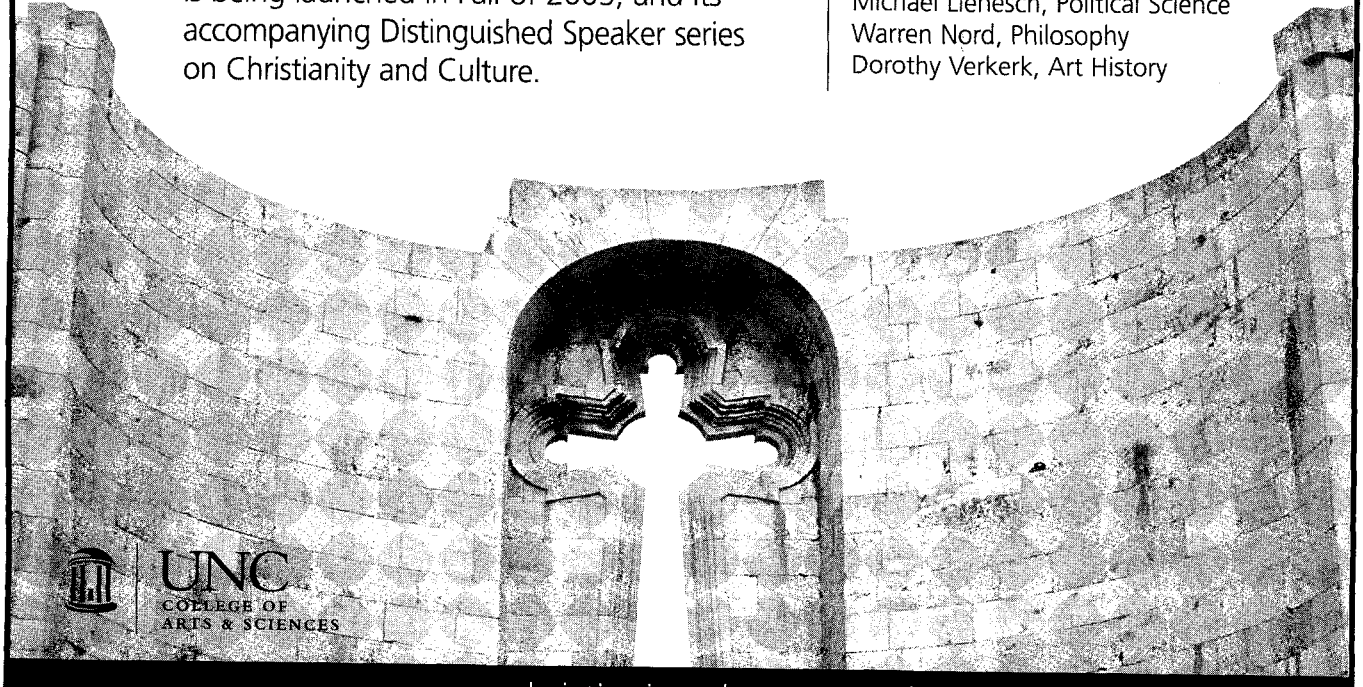

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Opinion

The New Orleans That Was

Richard John Neuhaus

We remember the big ones. There was Carla in 1961, Camille in 1969, and Andrew in 1992. Katrina will not be the last. When she hit, I checked the National Hurricane Center website, which indicated that names are already chosen for the next ones to hit the Atlantic Coast: Lee, Maria, Nate, Ophelia, Philippe, and Rita. I don't know what happened to the others, but we've already heard from Ophelia and Rita. The names are nicely gender-balanced. Names are scheduled for hurricanes through the year 2007, and history will, it seems likely, not end in 2007. But Katrina will, I expect, have a very special place in that history. Our anthropomorphic naming does not seem to personalize our disposition toward such disasters. In Katrina's case, a lot of people are very mad, but nobody appears to be very mad at her. Or at Mother Nature, or, for that matter, at God.

Only a few months ago, David Hart published his powerful little book, *The Doors of the Sea*, which asked in its subtitle: *Where Was God in the Tsunami?* Few people seem to be raising that question this time around. Maybe it was asked before because most of us didn't know anyone else to blame in Thailand, Sri Lanka, or Indonesia. This time there are lots of people to blame, and we know their names. Edward Rothstein of the *New York Times* says we're not asking the theodicy question because belief in God is weaker, and we assume human beings are, or should be, in control of everything. I'm rather sure the first part of that is wrong, but, if by "we" he means the media, he is right that the news business is more comfortable talking about human culpability than about a fallen creation, very much including nature, raging against the will of God.

Katrina concentrated, or should have concentrated, our minds on the fragility of both nature and human circumstance. "As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more," Psalm 103 declares. Make that the wind and the water. Many barely knew the names of some of those places, such as Delacroix, Mandeville, and Gulfport. But just about everybody knew New Orleans, either personally or by reputation. There were those who said it was a wicked city and deserved what it got.

Wickedness takes many forms. Beyond the fragility of nature and human mortality, the fragility of elementary decency was repugnantly on display during those September days. The looters, the rapists, the people shooting at rescue workers: They were on around-the-clock display on the television screens of the world for days on end. Reporters and anchors shied away from mentioning the obvious, that they were black—since one ineptly phrased reference to that reality, and a journalist is looking for another career.

Among racists, as well as those inclined to think unsentimentally about race, Katrina probably did more to reinforce stereotypes than anything since the urban riots of the late 1960s. That unhappy consequence was bolstered by the sadly predictable interventions of ethnocrats such as the Reverends Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton who had only to change the specifics of time and place in delivering their familiar indictment of racist America.

They were not alone. "National Shame," declared a New York tabloid headline in six-inch type. The *Times* carried a long op-ed by New Orleans author Anne Rice: "But to my country I want to say this: during this crisis you failed us. You looked down on us; you dismissed our victims; you dismissed us. You want our Jazz Fest, you want our Mardi Gras, you want our cooking and our music. Then when you saw us in real trouble, when you saw a tiny minority preying on the weak among us, you called us 'Sin City,' and turned your backs." America turned its back by watching and praying day and night, by sending tens of thousands of volunteers, by opening its cities and homes to hundreds of thousands of refugees, by donating nearly a billion dollars through churches and voluntary organizations, not to mention more than $200 billion in federal aid and reconstruction. Callous, unfeeling, hard-hearted America.

Incompetent America? Well, that is quite another matter. We now know there were all kinds of elaborate plans in place: thick strategy books developed by government bureaucracies over months and years, with much conferring, Powerpoint presenting, coordinating, facilitating, and interfacing in preparation for something precisely like Katrina. Almost none of it was implemented. While hundreds of school and transit buses sat neatly parked in the water, the mayor of New Orleans complained the poor could not get out because they had no cars. A third of the police force,

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one of the most notoriously corrupt and incompetent in the country, went AWOL, and those who did show up were offered a week in Las Vegas to recover from stress. As for the Louisiana governor, the less said the better. President Bush did not distinguish himself—not at least in the first days. It may have been unfair, the nature of the catastrophes was very different, but comparisons with Rudy Giuliani, and the president himself, after September 11 were inevitable. Monstrous bureaucracies such as Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) appeared to be clueless.

Of course, some people did work, and there are heroes and heroines in abundance. The ordinarily sensible Mickey Kaus at *Slate* seems to be urging that we scrap the federalist system and let the national government run the country from Washington. The Feds will be the first responders, the second responders, the only responders. That would conveniently wipe out the mediating structures of society—the churches and voluntary associations—that proved, once again, to be the best responders.

Still, Katrina was a massive blow to America's pride in its can-do spirit. David Brooks wrote that it was one in a long series of such devastating blows: "Over the past few years, we have seen intelligence failures in the inability to prevent Sept. 11 and find WMDs in Iraq. We have seen incompetent postwar planning. We have seen the collapse of Enron and corruption scandals on Wall Street. We have seen scandals at our leading magazines and newspapers, steroids in baseball, and the horror of Abu Ghraib." "There will be a reaction," he writes. "There is going to be some sort of big bang as people respond to the cumulative blows of bad events and try to fundamentally change the way things are."

Maybe, but I doubt it. The serial blows to American can-doism may instead induce something like humility. If that means tuning the "national greatness" agenda down a few notches, so be it.

There remains the question of rebuilding New Orleans. I have friends whose families go back generations there, and they are deeply divided. Some are in profound mourning for its death, and others defiantly declare that a little hurricane, or even a very big hurricane, cannot kill what New Orleans was and will be again. All agree that New Orleans was different from any other American city. Joel Lockhart Dyer once wrote, "New Orleans is North America's Venice; both cities are living on borrowed time." Michael Ledeen thinks Naples the more apt comparison: "Naples also faces destruction—volcanic destruction from 'Vesuvius the Exterminator,' as the poet Verga once wrote—and Naples, too, is noted for a lively, and often lawless style of life, along with great literature, art, cuisine, and music.... The European stereotype of the Neapolitan is very much like the American image of New Orleanians: lazy, happy, spontaneous, and unrepressed, slow-moving but quick-witted, and very happy with the food."

New Orleans is a streetcar named Desire that has made its final run. The French Quarter, built on the city's original and higher ground, was not so badly damaged. I suppose it could be revived as a clean, well-lighted place, but that would not be New Orleans. The play city of New Orleans was also situated in a swamp of poverty, corruption, and decadence. Swamp and city were inextricably joined, and the hundreds of thousands who have relocated may not want to return to the swamp. Halliburton and Disney may spruce up the tourist attractions, and it may be a great success, as the cleaning up of Times Square has proved. But it will not be New Orleans. Times Square is not New York; there are many other places to go and things to do. In New Orleans, the central attraction was the French Quarter—and it cannot be the French Quarter without the surrounding decadence, Dixieland, and broken dreams.

Then there is the stubborn matter of time, which no degree of efficiency can accelerate. Paul Greenberg writes, "Even if you could rebuild her just as she was, every cobblestone and lamppost in place, it wouldn't be the same. For there is no replacement for time, the one indispensable element that adds a unique luster to everything well aged, even the simplest things, like a cobbler's bench used for forty years, or your grandmother's thimble." And there are those who ask, not without reason, whether it really makes sense to rebuild a city below sea level, just waiting for Katrina's cousin.

On the other hand, urban historian Joel Kotkin envisions a new and exciting future for the place. New Orleans, he writes, has been declining for nearly a century. In 1920, its population was three times that of Houston and nine times that of Miami. Unlike New Orleans, those cities "have fed off the 'animal spirits' of entrepreneurs and had the foresight to invest in basic infrastructure." A new New Orleans of entrepreneurship, foresight, efficiency, and that old American get-up-and-go spirit? Maybe. But it would not be New Orleans. It would be the anti-Big Easy that we uneasily loved.

In the chaos of Katrina, it was repeatedly said that this is the kind of thing that happens in the third world, not in America. There had always been something of the third world about New Orleans. It was an American anomaly. In addition to Naples, there was

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also the feel of what one finds in Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro, or even of Dakar in Senegal in the last days of colonial control. Throw in the antebellum South. In New Orleans, one often came across historical oddments, such as the crown of thorns that Pope Pius IX plaited for the imprisoned Jefferson Davis, in the tattered Museum of the Confederacy. New Orleans was a pervasively Catholic city that knew all about "inculturation" long before the Second Vatican Council. There was voodoo, pentecostal enthusiasm, and superstition galore, and it was far from clear what had inculturated what. Between the evil eye and sacramental grace there was an unspoken pact, and for everything, if you didn't get yourself killed, there was absolution. New Orleans lived off absolution. Theologians may call it cheap grace, but it was grace enough to keep the sinners going from day to day.

I spoke there from time to time at the universities, Loyola and Tulane, and once to a group of business leaders. These are the white and wealthy patrons who pretended to let the black folk rule by choosing the politicians for whom they could vote. New Orleans was an unabashedly traditional and hierarchical city that managed to accommodate the civil rights movement with relatively slight inconvenience. Welfare and circuses did not make for prosperity, but it pacified the restless. The "krewes" were the elite clubs in charge of the lavish Mardi Gras floats, and nobody seriously challenged their authoritative delineation of who was who in the social order of New Orleans. I was musing with the business leaders about the strangeness of it all and wondering how it came to be, when a gentleman who was "in real estate" (and was said to own a third of the city) politely interrupted and said, "Well, you have to understand, Father, that New Orleans just kinda happened."

I expect that's right, and no amount of local pride, entrepreneurial capitalism, or massive government aid will make it happen again. There will be a New Orleans again. The port and refineries will get back on their feet and the tourists will flock to the "revived" French Quarter. But it will not be New Orleans. It will work hard at being New Orleans, but precisely to the degree that it works hard at being New Orleans, or works hard at anything for that matter, it is not New Orleans. The tourists will tell themselves they have been to New Orleans, and those who remember will kindly decline to disabuse them.

Things happen, both good and bad. New Orleans happened, Katrina happened, and sometime soon maybe all those other hurricane names will happen. It's a very un-American thought, that we are not in control. It's a humbling and freeing thought. It's the truth that created that most un-American of America's cities. The can-do spirit of mastery that re-creates New Orleans, if it is to be re-created, will give us another American city. A city with a particularly colorful past, as the tourist brochures will put it, but an American city. New Orleans was the un-American city that reminded us that—both despite and because of its insouciant craziness and genius for disorder—there is a humanly attractive alternative to the overweening efficiency, rationality, and delusion of control that we call the American Way.

Richard John Neuhaus is the editor-in-chief of FIRST THINGS.

Lutherans Undefined

Robert Benne

This August, at its 2005 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) sidestepped the decisions it needs to make on sexuality—and several pastors of large Lutheran congregations, together with at least one bishop, voiced their relief that they were not going to have to leave the denomination. At least, not yet. Sharing their relief, I decided not to resign several roles that I play in the ELCA and not to press my parish council for a decision on the blessing of homosexual unions. As my bishop put it, "The status quo has been affirmed."

At the same time, revisionist pastors, bishops, and laypersons voiced approval of the "progress" made at Orlando. They lamented the unwillingness of the assembly to endorse two of the three proposals submitted by the Church's leadership. But the revisionists, too, are willing to stay in the ELCA, because they think time and momentum is on their side. The future, they think, is theirs.

The assessments of both sides contain some truth. The orthodox Lutherans succeeded in defeating two key proposals of the leadership regarding sexuality issues. Yet, as the revisionists believe, the forces pushing the ELCA toward accommodating liberal Protestant attitudes on those issues are still powerfully at work.

The summer assembly in Orlando faced three proposals, the latter two of which would have created large shifts in the ELCA's relation to the larger Christian world. The first proposal asked Church members

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to "find ways to live together faithfully in the midst of our disagreements" about same-sex unions. The second declared respect for the guidance of the 1993 statement of the Conference of Bishops that there is no basis in scripture or tradition to bless gay and lesbian unions, but at the same time required Lutherans to trust their pastors and congregations to offer appropriate pastoral care to same-sex couples. And the third proposal allowed gays and lesbians in partnered relationships to be ordained in exceptional cases and circumstances for "the sake of mission."

These three proposals represented the Church Council's revision of the three proposals of the Sexuality Task Force, which had spent three years and over a million dollars to come up with a political compromise rather than a normative theological judgment on homosexual conduct. As it happens, the task force had found that at least 56 percent—probably more like 66 percent—of the respondents to its studies opposed changes in Church teachings or practices. But the ELCA leadership pressed forward. The Church Council voted 30-2 to forward its proposals to the assembly.

At the assembly, nearly all the bishops of metropolitan and West Coast synods spoke forcefully for the council proposals. Six out of the seven preachers at daily worship implicitly or explicitly endorsed them. Seminary professors and retired Presiding Bishop Chilstrom spoke for the proposals. Leaders of the youth assembly were trotted out to announce their near unanimous support for the Council proposals. At least 150 persons—including many voting members—wore rainbow scarves in support of blessing same-sex unions and ordaining homosexual pastors. They conducted a silent protest in the front of the assembly hall after the second Church Council proposal was tightened by an amendment.

But most effective for the revisionists was the atmosphere of the assembly, which was charged with what one could call "the spirit of progressive Protestantism." That atmosphere was intimidating to those who supported traditional teachings and policies, and dramatically different from what ordinary Lutherans experience in their congregations.

Two well-organized dissenting groups stood against this progressive movement: Solid Rock for Lutherans and Word Alone. Their research indicated that they had around four hundred voting supporters at the assembly while their opponents (led by a group called Goodsoil) had around three hundred. The remaining assembly members, about three hundred, were the ones who would swing the assembly, one way or another. As it turned out, the middle did not do much swinging. It did not want much change, but it did not want firm teaching and practice either.

Solid Rock tried to get the Church Council and the task force to clarify the second proposal, which seemed to affirm traditional teaching even while allowing local pastors and congregations to bless gay unions under the guise of "pastoral care." But the Church leadership tenaciously refused to clarify the issue, and some members argued this ambiguity was an example of the "paradoxical nature" of Lutheran theology.

Attempts to clarify the proposal in both directions were defeated. Bishop Neils of the Grand Canyon Synod tried to clarify the proposal by having it explicitly affirm the blessing of gay unions, but lost by a two-to-one margin. Solid Rock then offered a substitute motion that applied the Conference of Bishops 1993 statement consistently to all levels of the Church's life, including its pastoral care, which also lost, 42 percent to 58 percent.

Then Lower Susquehanna Bishop Carol Hendrix, who had spoken in favor of the Solid Rock clarification, offered an amendment that brought the proposal in line with the 1993 bishops' statement (which did not even mention same-sex couples when it dealt with pastoral care). Hendrix's amendment said that pastors and congregations should welcome gays and lesbians into the life of the Church and "trust pastors and congregations to discern ways to provide faithful pastoral care for all to whom they minister." This was viewed a small victory by Solid Rock, bringing relief to those who feared dramatic change. The proposal, however, is still ambiguous enough to allow revisionists to continue blessing same-sex unions without fear of discipline.

The third proposal, which would have allowed ordination of gays and lesbians in partnered relationships under an exceptional process, needed two-thirds of the votes of the assembly to pass (because it would mean a change in the Church's by-laws). In the end, it did not achieve even 50 percent, going down by 503 to 490. The revisionists were disappointed while the orthodox were disturbed that there were that many who supported such ordinations.

Traditionalists were able to persuade the assembly not to take that last fateful step over the brink on sexuality issues. But many other actions and agitations at the assembly suggest the momentum of the ELCA will soon overcome all hesitation. The leadership, which created the atmosphere of progressive Protestantism at the assembly, pushed through programs that in many ways are more disturbing than those it proposed on sexuality issues, particularly those dealing with worship, governance, and political matters such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

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For instance, the leadership proposed—and the assembly affirmed—a process that will lead to a new hymnal, which will alter the words of the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds so that hypersensitive feminists will not be offended by masculine language. In the Nicene Creed we will avoid confessing that Christ was "made man." Rather, he "became human." In the Apostles' Creed we will evade a masculine pronoun for God in the second article. Instead of "We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son," we will now confess that "We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son." The ELCA is now willing to risk a heretical formulation of the Creed in favor of femspeak. (In a Trinitarian formula the Son is Son of the Father, not of the Triune God. The Son of the Triune God would be another God.)

Many of the Psalms are to be rewritten to circumvent masculine pronouns. A hymn, paraphrasing the twenty-third psalm, changed "The Lord is my shepherd" to "God is my shepherd." The "Renewing Worship" materials used at the assembly shunned "Father," "Lord," and "Master," all replaced by "God." Not one ELCA official allowed a "his" or "he" to creep into a speech. The presiding bishop even used the horrific neologism "Godself" a number of times.

On governance matters, the ELCA retained the quota system that is now deeply embedded in its polity. Minorities are over-represented by five times their number. Women pastors are over-represented by two and a half times. Laity constitute sixty percent of the assembly. Aimed at minimizing the presence of white male clergy, these representational principles skew the assembly ideologically and have the effect of profoundly weakening the presence of theologians. Reorganization of the national church office sharply centralized power, and there will be little in the new organization to check the presiding bishop. Word Alone tried to expand the Church Council to include elected members from each of the ELCA's sixty-five synods, but to no avail. The gap between the Church's offices in Chicago and the local parishes will be widened by these actions.

The most egregious of the progressive actions foisted upon the assembly was a campaign called "Peace Not Walls—Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," which chastises Israel for building a wall partly on Palestinian lands. The glossy sheet passed out to explain the program is replete with inflammatory words such as "occupation," "confiscating land and water," and calling "for an immediate halt to construction of the wall." The brochure nowhere mentions terrorism or the right of Israel to protect itself. It asks ELCA members to call upon President Bush to stop the construction of the wall. The assembly was strongly pressed to accept this grossly biased approach to a complex issue. Bishop Rimbo spoke glowingly of the campaign and arranged for Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land to address the assembly by telephone. The Bishop then proceeded to offer a highly politicized message. Though there were many stirring attacks from the floor on the proposal, it passed handily, 668-279. This happened in spite of a half-page advertisement in *USA Today* by a Jewish organization pleading for fairness by the ELCA and an exhortation to be balanced by Rabbi Eric Yoffie, who brought greetings from the Jewish community to the assembly.

All this progressive agitating comes from the national level of the ELCA, just as it comes from the national headquarters of the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church of the USA, and the Presbyterian Church USA. The leadership of these denominations are thorough-going liberal Protestants. From its inception and with increasing momentum, the ELCA has identified itself with these declining mainline denominations. The ecumenical relationships it really celebrates are those with these mainline bodies. Indeed, Bishop Hanson of the ELCA quotes his counterpart in the United Church of Christ, John Thomas, more frequently than any other leader.

Liberal Protestants have increasingly substituted a different gospel for the classic one in which sinners are freed from sin, death, and the devil by the grace of God in Christ's death and resurrection. The liberal Protestant establishment, while it possesses some remnants of the classic formulation, focuses on a gospel of liberation from oppressive ideologies and institutions: racism, sexism, heterosexism, monoculturalism, and imperialism.

Sadly, the ELCA has now embraced the liberal Protestant agenda. Once one understands that this version of the gospel is actually the working theology of the ELCA, the actions and agitations of the Churchwide Assembly can be placed in a meaningful context. The themes of liberal Protestantism have become the non-negotiable items in the agenda of the ELCA, and it fights for them ceaselessly. Thus it stands firmly for quotas (to fight racism and monoculturalism), unqualified abortion rights (to fight sexism), the homosexual agenda (to fight heterosexism), centralization of power (to fight the benighted masses of the church who are infected with all the "-isms"), a relentless purging of masculine language from worship materials (to fight sexism), and left-wing foreign policy positions on Iraq and Israel (to fight imperialism).

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Few Lutherans—either traditional or progressive—believe the ELCA's liberal agenda has been halted by the resistance mounted in Orlando. Though the assembly witnessed a brief pause on homosexual issues, the movement pushing the ELCA is as strong as ever. A new association to oppose the progressive drive of the Lutheran Church is being formed this fall, in the hope that an orthodox movement will go beyond resistance and find a positive strategy for "taking back the ELCA." It will first attempt to re-center the church on the gospel as Lutherans have traditionally understood it. By the assembly of 2007 the organization should be well established and active. There is no way of knowing whether such a strategy will be successful, but it seems worth expending such effort to revive a great church.

Robert Benne was a voting member of the Virginia Synod at the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in Orlando, Florida, in August. He directs the Roanoke College Center for Religion and Society in Salem, Virginia.

The Monahans

They chose the countryside
to make their tangled beds,
the lissome girl beneath,
the tousled boy astride.

We'd see them after dark,
her hair of palest oak
espalliered in the grass,
in meadow, field and park.

Until gray-fingered days
brought righteous wind and rain,
no patch of ground was spared
their amorous forays.

Her hair has gone to snow
from shades of palest oak.
For years a vital man,
arthritis brought him low.

Too old for escapades,
they rarely venture out.
How strange that they'd suggest
this latter love is best.

T.S. Kerrigan

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The Covenant With Israel

Avery Cardinal Dulles

The question of the present status of God's covenant with Israel has been extensively discussed in Jewish-Christian dialogues since the Shoah. Catholics look for an approach that fits in the framework of Catholic doctrine, much of which has been summarized by the Second Vatican Council. According to post-conciliar documents, in interpreting the council, priority should be given to the four great constitutions, then to the decrees, and finally to the declarations. The Declaration on Non-Christian Religions, though excellent, is not exhaustive or sufficient. It needs to be understood in the broader context of the full teaching of the council.

The Second Vatican Council taught with great emphasis that there is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. All salvation comes through Christ, and there is no salvation in any other name. In Christ, the incarnate Son of God, revelation reaches its unsurpassable fullness. Everyone is in principle required to believe in Christ as the way, the truth, and the life, and in the Church he has established as an instrument for the salvation of all. Anyone who, being aware of this, refuses to enter the Church or remain in her cannot be saved. On the other hand, persons who "through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God, and moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them" may attain to everlasting salvation in some manner known to God.

Christ gave the apostles, and through them the Church, the solemn commission to preach the saving truth of the gospel even to the ends of the earth: "The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his ability," as *Lumen Gentium* puts it. The Church "prays and labors in order that the entire world may become the People of God, the Body of the Lord, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and that in Christ, the Head of all, there may be rendered to the Creator and Author of the Universe all honor and glory."

In seeking to spread the faith, Christians should remember that faith is by its very nature a free response to the word of God. Moral or physical coercion must therefore be avoided. While teaching this, the council regretfully admits that at certain times and places the faith has been propagated in ways that were not in accord with—or were even opposed to—the spirit of the gospel.

Christian revelation did not come into the world without a long preparation, beginning with our first parents, Adam and Eve. Through Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, God taught Israel "to acknowledge him as the one living and true God, provident Father and just judge, and to wait for the Savior promised by him," as the council's dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, *Dei Verbum*, declares. God "entered into a covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen 15:18) and, through Moses, with the people of Israel." "The principal purpose to which the plan of the Old Covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming both of Christ, the universal Redeemer, and of the messianic kingdom." One and the same God is the inspirer and author of both the Old and the New Testaments. He "wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and that the Old be made manifest by the New."

The people of the new covenant have a special spiritual bond with Abraham's stock, the council's *Nostra Aetate* insists. The Church gratefully recalls that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people of Israel. She is aware that, even though Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, and the Jews in large numbers have failed to accept the gospel, still, according to Paul, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers.

The Second Vatican Council, while providing a solid and traditional framework for discussing Jewish-Christian relations, did not attempt to settle all questions. In particular, it left open the question whether the Old Covenant remains in force today. Are there two

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covenants, one for Jews and one for Christians? If so, are the two related as phases of a single developing covenant, a single saving plan of God? May Jews who embrace Christianity continue to adhere to Jewish covenantal practices?

In the half-century since Vatican II major contributions to Catholic covenant theology have been made by Pope John Paul II, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI), Walter Cardinal Kasper, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the Pontifical Biblical Commission. With these contributions, together with some less authoritative writings, we may find a path through the thickets of controversy.

A place to start is the term "Old Covenant," which is sometimes criticized on the ground that the adjective "old" suggests the idea of being antiquated, even obsolete. Perhaps because I am no longer young, I find it difficult to share this criticism. When people speak of the "old country," for example, they do not imply that the old no longer exists or is close to dissolution. In any case the term "Old Covenant" is solidly in place. It appears in writings of Paul and in much official teaching, including the documents of Vatican II. Some writers, following the Letter to the Hebrews, may prefer to speak of the "first" or "prior" covenant. All of these terms, considered in themselves, leave open the question whether or not the earlier covenant is still in force.

To judge from the Scriptures, the Old Covenant itself is multiple. In the Hebrew Bible we read of a whole series of covenants being established before the coming of Christ, notably those made with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. In Romans, Paul speaks of the Jews having been given "covenants" in the plural. The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer in the *Roman Missal* praises God for having offered covenants to his people "many times" (*foedera pluries hominibus obtulisti*). The term "Old Covenant" could be used to refer to the whole series, but when Paul uses the term in 2 Corinthians 3:14 (compare Galatians 4:24-25), he is evidently referring to the Mosaic Law. And this, I believe, is the normal practice of Christians. The Old Covenant par excellence is that of Sinai.

The term "covenant" is the usual translation of the Hebrew *b'rith* and the Greek *diathēkē*. Scholars commonly distinguish between two types of covenant, the covenant grant and the covenant treaty. The covenant grant, modeled on the free royal decree, is an unconditional divine gift and is usually understood to be irrevocable. An example would be the covenant of God with Noah and his descendants in Genesis 9:8-17. God makes an everlasting promise not to destroy all living creatures by another flood such as the one that has just subsided. The covenant to make Abraham the Father of many nations in Genesis 15:5-6 and 17:4-8 and the promise to David to give an everlasting kingship to his son in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 are gratuitous and unilateral. They are also unconditional and irrevocable, though only in their deepest meaning.

The prime example of a conditional covenant is that of Sinai, as interpreted in the Deuteronomic tradition. It promises blessings on those who observe its conditions and curses on those who violate them (see, for example, Deuteronomy 30:15-20). The Israelites almost immediately broke the covenant by worshiping the golden calf, but after the people's repentance, God in his mercy reestablished the covenant. Jeremiah teaches that Israel has broken the Sinai covenant, but that God will give them a "new covenant," placing his law upon their hearts and making them his people (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The term *b'rith* is usually translated "covenant," but this translation tends to emphasize the bilateral and conditional character of the engagement. The same word can also be translated "testament" and was so translated in the Old Latin version before Jerome composed his Vulgate. The term "testament" better conveys the idea that God is acting freely, out of sheer generosity, and that his gift is unconditional. The paradoxical intertwining of the unilateral and the bilateral, the conditional and the unconditional, is one of the elements that complicates the question whether the so-called "Old Covenant" still perdures.

The term "New Covenant" raises an additional set of questions. The New Testament authors, borrowing the term from Jeremiah 31:31, interpret it as a prediction of the new dispensation that would come about with Christ and the Church (Hebrews 8:8-13, 10:16; see also 2 Corinthians 3:3). According to the accounts of the Last Supper in the Gospel of Luke and in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Jesus referred to the chalice as "the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25). The Gospels of Matthew and Mark record only that Jesus spoke of his "blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24).

In both versions the mention of blood points back to the solemnization of the Sinai Covenant, at which Moses sprinkled the people with the blood of sacrificed animals and poured the remainder on the altar (Exodus 24:5-8). The Eucharist therefore is the covenant sacrifice that binds God and his Church to one another. The "New Covenant" is constitutive of the "New People of God," or the "New Israel"—terms that Vatican II uses as designations of the Church of Christ.

In the Roman canon of the Mass, the Covenant established by the shedding of Christ's blood is described as "new and eternal." The word "eternal" comes from the Letter to the Hebrews, which speaks of

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"the blood of the eternal covenant" by which Jesus equips the sheep to do God's will. Vatican II speaks in *Dei Verbum* of the Christian dispensation as "the new and definitive covenant." The suggestion seems to be that the prior covenant or covenants were not eternal or definitive, but temporary or preparatory.

The New Testament, in certain passages, indicates that the Old Law or the Old Covenant has come to an end and been replaced. Paul in Second Corinthians draws a contrast between the Old Covenant, carved on stone, which has lost its previous splendor, and the New Covenant, written on human hearts by the Spirit, which is permanent and shines brightly. In the third and fourth chapters of Galatians he draws a sharp contrast between the covenant promises given to Abraham and the law subsequently given through Moses. The two covenants, in this passage, are represented by the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac. The law, he says, was our custodian until Christ came, but it was incapable of giving justification, and loses its force once Christ has come. Fulfilling the promises given to Abraham, Christ brings an end to the Old Law.

In Second Corinthians Paul refers to the "old covenant" as the "dispensation of death," which has "faded away." In Romans he speaks of Christ as "the end of the Law," apparently meaning its termination, its goal, or both. The Mosaic Law ceases to bind once its objective has been attained. The new dispensation may be called the "law of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2) or the "law of the Spirit" (Romans 8:2). The Letter to the Hebrews contains in chapters seven to ten a lengthy discussion of the two covenants based on the two priesthoods, that of Levi and that of Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant. The Old Law, with its priesthood and Temple sacrifices, has been superseded and abolished by the coming of the New.

All these texts, which the Church accepts as teachings of canonical scripture, have to be reconciled with others, which seem to point in a different direction. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, teaches that he has come not to abolish the Law and the prophets but to fulfill them, even though he is here embarking on a series of antitheses, in which he both supplements and corrects certain provisions in the law of Moses. In a passage of great importance, Paul asserts in Romans that the Jews have only stumbled. They are branches broken off from the good olive tree, but are capable of being grafted on again, since they are still beloved by God for the sake of their forefathers, whose gifts and call are irrevocable. This seems to imply that the Jewish people, notwithstanding their failure as a group to accept Christ as the Messiah, still remain in some sort of covenant relationship with God.

Such is the Church's respect for Holy Scripture that Catholic interpreters are not free to reject any of these New Testament passages as if one contradicted another. Systematic theology has to seek a way of reconciling and synthesizing them. The task, I believe, is feasible if we make certain necessary distinctions. Thomas Aquinas, gathering up a host of patristic and medieval authorities, distinguished the moral, ceremonial, and judicial precepts of the Old Law. Inspired in part by his reflections, I find it useful to distinguish three aspects of the Old Covenant: as law, as promise, and as interpersonal relation with God. The law, in turn, may be subdivided into the moral and the ceremonial.

The moral law of the Old Testament is in its essentials permanent. The Decalogue, given on Sinai, is at its core a republication of the law of nature, written on all human hearts even prior to any positive divine legislation. The commandments reflecting the natural law, reaffirmed in the New Testament, are binding on Christians. But, as St. Thomas explains in the *Summa* (I-II.98.5), the Mosaic Law contains additions in view of the special vocation and situation of the Jewish people. The Decalogue itself, as given in Exodus and Deuteronomy, contains some ceremonial prescriptions together with the moral.

Injunctions that were over and above the natural law could be modified. The Church, adapting the law to a new stage in salvation history, was able to transfer the Sabbath observance from the last day of the week to the first and to cancel the Mosaic prohibition against images. The New Law, in its moral prescriptions, is much more than a republication of the Old. The law is broadened insofar as it is extended to all peoples and all ages, inviting them to enter into a covenant relationship with God. It is deepened insofar as Christ interiorizes and radicalizes it, enjoining attitudes and intentions that were not previously matters of legislation.

Most important, Christ bestows the Holy Spirit, who writes the New Law upon the hearts of all who receive him. The Law of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2) deserves to be called a law, according to St. Thomas, because the Holy Spirit, poured forth in the human heart, both enlightens the mind and stably inclines the affections toward acts of virtue. Although the law of the Spirit is especially characteristic of those who have entered the Church, St. Thomas adds the qualification that at all times some have belonged to the New Covenant. It would be a mistake to imagine that the commandment of love arose only with the coming of Jesus. Even in the Old Testament, the love of God and neighbor is seen as a fundamental obligation.

Those who treat the Old Covenant as dead and superseded are generally thinking of its legal prescriptions, especially those connected with worship, as treat-

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ed in the Letters of Paul and the Letter to the Hebrews. Paul's strictures on the Mosaic Law are found especially in Second Corinthians and Galatians, where he vehemently rejects the position of some Judeo-Christians who were seeking to impose circumcision on members of the Church. Christians, Paul insists, are not obliged to observe the rites of the Old Law. The Letter to the Hebrews, which is essentially a treatise on priesthood, teaches that with the cessation of the Levitical priesthood and the Temple sacrifices, the Old Covenant is to that extent superseded: "For where there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change of law as well." The former commandment is set aside, since a "better hope" and a "better covenant" have been introduced. Christ therefore "abolishes the first in order to establish the second."

The Pontifical Biblical Commission, in *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, presents a thorough discussion of the Covenant and concludes that Paul regards the covenant-law of Sinai as provisional and insufficient. Hebrews, it declares, proclaims that the cultic institutions of the "first covenant" are now "abrogated to make way for the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ."

It took several decades of heated controversy for the Church to reach a consensus that Christians, especially those of Gentile origin, were not bound by circumcision and Jewish dietary laws. Jesus himself, of course, had been circumcised and had kept the Law in what the Catechism calls "its all-embracing detail," even though the Pharisees did not consider him sufficiently observant. With the help of further revelation, the leaders of the Church decided that Gentile converts are not bound by Jewish dietary laws (Acts 15). But even after that decision Paul allowed Timothy to be circumcised, because he was of Jewish parentage (Acts 16:1-3).

Even with respect to the ceremonial laws and institutions, the New Covenant is not a simple abolition of the Old, but rather its fulfillment. According to Christian theology, Christ is the new Moses, the new Aaron, the new David, and the new Temple. Thomas Aquinas explains in detail how the sacraments of the New Law fulfill what is foreshadowed in those of the Old Law. Baptism, as the sacrament of faith, succeeds circumcision. The Eucharist, he says, is prefigured under different aspects by different institutions of the Old Law: the offering of Melchizedek, the day of atonement, the manna, and especially the paschal Lamb. In another passage St. Thomas lists the various solemnities of the Old Law and their antitypes in the New. The Passover, for example, becomes the Paschal triduum. The Jewish Pentecost, which celebrated the giving of the Old Law, gives way to the Christian Pentecost, which recalls the gift of the Holy Spirit. The festivals of the new moons prefigure, and give way to, feasts of the Blessed Virgin, who reflects the light of the Sun that is Christ.

With respect to the ceremonial law, therefore, we may say that the Old Covenant is in a sense abolished while being at the same time fulfilled. The law of Christ gives a definitive interpretation to the Torah of Moses. Yet the ancient rites retain their value as signs of what was to come. The priesthood, the temple, and the sacrifices are not extinct; they survive in a super-eminent way in Christ and the Church.

St. Augustine, followed by Thomas Aquinas and many medieval doctors, denied that Jewish rites had any saving efficacy, even for Jews. The Council of Florence, in its Decree for the Copts, taught that the legal statutes of ancient Israel, including circumcision and the Sabbath, ought no longer to be observed after the promulgation of the gospel, and that converts from Judaism must give up Jewish ritual practices.

In a letter to Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, then archbishop of Paris, Michael Wyschogrod pointedly asked what the cardinal meant when he wrote that in becoming a Christian he had not ceased to be a Jew and had not run away from the Jewish tradition. For Wyschogrod, it seems, Jewish identity would require observance of the Torah and Jewish tradition. By forbidding converted Jews to observe the Torah, he holds, the Church fell into a supersessionism from which it is today seeking to extricate itself. If Lustiger had responded he might have pointed out that according to the teaching of Paul, which is normative for Christians, circumcision and the Mosaic law have lost their salvific value, at least for Christians, and in that sense been "superseded." But I do not wish to deny that the observance of some of these prescriptions by Jews who have become Christians could be permissible or even praiseworthy as a way of recalling the rootedness of Christianity in the Old Covenant.

Under its second aspect, the Old Covenant is promise. In itself, this is a point of commonality between Christians and Jews, since both groups are conscious of awaiting the historical fulfillment of the messianic age. While Jews still hope for the arrival of that age, Christians understand it to be already underway, though awaiting completion at the end-time.

The promise of the land to Abraham refers literally to the territory of Canaan, where he and his descendants were to settle, and was historically fulfilled in later centuries. The kingship promised to the Son of David in 2 Samuel is partially fulfilled in the reign of Solomon but, in its conditional aspects, was abrogated because of the sins of the king and the people.

The promises, however, have a deeper, spiritual meaning that remains intact. In the beatitudes Jesus

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reinterprets the "land" promised to Abraham in a spiritual sense to mean the kingdom of heaven, that is to say, the new earth to be inhabited by the saints in eternal life. Paul understands the "progeny of Abraham" to mean all who share the faith of Abraham. The Davidic kingship becomes, in the New Testament, the glorious reign of the risen Christ, the son of David. And the New Testament authors see the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church as the realization of the "New Covenant" predicted by Jeremiah.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission draws the correct conclusion: "The early Christians were conscious of being in profound continuity with the covenant plan manifested and realized by the God of Israel in the Old Testament. Israel continues to be in a covenant relationship with God, because the covenant-promise is definitive and cannot be abolished. But the early Christians were also conscious of living in a new phase of that plan, announced by the prophets and inaugurated by the blood of Jesus, 'blood of the covenant,' because it was shed out of love."

It could be asked whether there are any promises to Israel that are not fulfilled in Christ and are waiting to be fulfilled in some other way. Is Judaism still needed to point to these further possibilities? Paul replies: "All the promises of God find their Yes in Him" (2 Corinthians 1:20). There is nothing incomplete in Christ's fulfillment of what is promised and foreshadowed in the Old Testament. It is true, of course, that human beings still have to enter fully into that fulfillment. God is still leading the elect toward the fullness of truth and life in Christ. Christians themselves are still growing into him who is the head of the body (Ephesians 4:15) and becoming incorporated into God's holy temple (Ephesians 2:21-22).

Judaism, in this view, does not point to possibilities Christ failed to fulfill. But the witness of Jews to their tradition helps Christians understand the foundations of their own faith. By providing a living testimony to the hope of Israel and to the ancient promises, faithful Jews can inspire and strengthen Christians, who share the same hope and promises, though in a new modality.

The Old Covenant has been understood predominantly in terms of the Law and the promises it contains. But in the light of modern personalism, another dimension is becoming more evident: the covenant as an interpersonal relationship between God and his elect people. In his *Many Religions—One Covenant*, Cardinal Ratzinger remarked: "In asking about the covenant, we are asking whether there can be a relationship between God and man, and what kind of relationship it might be." At the heart of all the laws and promises is a loving relationship that the Scriptures do not hesitate to describe quite simply as a "marriage" (Hosea 2 and 11; Ezekiel 16). In this marriage God remains faithful to his partner even in the face of human infidelity.

At the heart of the covenant lies the promise: "You shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:28, Leviticus 26:12, Jeremiah 7:23, etc.). Under Christianity, the Church understands herself to be the New People of God (1 Peter 2:9-10, Revelation 21:3). But this claim does not settle the status of the Old Israel, the People of the First Covenant. Does Israel cease to be the People of God?

For an answer to this question the key text would seem to be, for Christians, chapters nine through eleven of Romans. Paul's thought in these chapters is exceedingly complex and has given rise to a variety of interpretations. Perhaps Paul himself intended to leave some questions open. He ends the section with an exclamation of awe-filled humility before the incomprehensible ways of God: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable are his ways!"

Without any pretense of giving a final solution I shall try to indicate some elements of a tenable Catholic position. Paul in this passage clearly teaches that God has not rejected His People, for His gifts and call are irrevocable. As regards election, they are unceasingly beloved for the sake of their forefathers. "If they do not persist in their unbelief," he says, the children of Israel "will be grafted in" to the olive tree from which they have been cut off. He predicts that in the end "all Israel will be saved" and that their reconciliation and full inclusion will mean life from the dead. God's continuing love and fidelity to his promises indicate that the Old Covenant is still in force in one of its most important aspects—God's gracious predilection for His Chosen People.

Pope John Paul II, whose theology was deeply affected by personalism, spoke of the Jews as a covenant people. In an address in Rome on October 31, 1997, he discussed the act of divine election that brought this people into existence: "This people is assembled and led by Yahweh, creator of heaven and of earth. Its existence is therefore not purely a fact of nature or of culture in the sense that the resourcefulness proper to one's nature is expressed in culture. It is a supernatural fact. This people perseveres despite everything because it is the people of the covenant, and despite human infidelities, Yahweh is faithful to his covenant. To ignore this most basic principle is to adopt a Marcionism against which the church immediately and vigorously reacted, conscious of a vital link with the Old Testament, without which the New Testament itself is emptied of meaning."

Vatican II brought out the profound truth that the mystery of Israel and the mystery of the Church are permanently intertwined: "As this sacred people

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searches into the mystery of the Church, it recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock." The Church is conscious that she is a branch grafted onto the olive tree of Israel. Pope John Paul II was deeply conscious of this affinity. Speaking at the synagogue of Rome on April 13, 1986, he made the point: "The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic' to us, but in a certain way is 'intrinsic' to our own religion. With Judaism, therefore, we have a relationship which we do not have with any other religion. You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers."

In continuity with Vatican II and earlier Catholic tradition, John Paul II saw the two covenants as intrinsically related. The Old is a preview and promise of the New; the New is the unveiling and fulfillment of the Old. "The New Covenant," he declared, "serves to fulfill all that is rooted in the vocation of Abraham, in God's covenant with Israel at Sinai, and in the whole rich heritage of the inspired Prophets who, hundreds of years before that fulfillment, pointed in the Sacred Scriptures to the One whom God would send in the 'fullness of time.'"

Some Christians, in their eagerness to reject a crude supersessionism, give independent validity to the Old Covenant. They depict the Old and New Covenants as two 'separate but equal' parallel paths to salvation, the one intended for Jews, the other for gentiles. The commentator Roy H. Schoeman correctly remarks this thesis "has been presented as though it were the only logical alternative to supersessionism, despite the fact that it is utterly irreconcilable with both the core beliefs of Christianity and with the words of Jesus himself in the New Testament." Joseph Fitzmyer, in his scholarly commentary on Romans, likewise opposes the theory of two separate ways of salvation: "It is difficult to see how Paul would envisage two different kinds of salvation, one brought about by God apart from Christ for Jews, and one by Christ for Gentiles and believing Jews. That would seem to militate against his whole thesis of justification and salvation by grace for *all* who believe in the gospel of Christ Jesus (1:16). For Paul the only basis for membership in the new people of God is faith in Christ Jesus."

It is unthinkable that in these chapters of Romans Paul would be proposing salvation for Jews apart from Christ. He spent much of his ministry seeking to evangelize his fellow Jews. In the very passage in which he speaks of God's abiding love for Israel, he confesses his great sorrow and anguish at Israel's unbelief. He would be ready, he says, to be accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his brethren, his kinsmen by race, who have not accepted Jesus as Messiah.

The Catholic Church clearly teaches that no one will be condemned for unbelief, or for incomplete belief, without having sinned against the light. Those who with good will follow the movements of God's grace in their own lives are on the road to salvation. They are not required to profess belief in Christ unless or until they are in a position to recognize him as Messiah and Lord. The fact that Jews and Christians have honest differences about this point is a powerful incentive for dialogue between them.

John Paul II was not content to let Judaism and Christianity go their separate ways. Speaking at Mainz in 1980, he called for ongoing dialogue "between the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God, and that of the New Covenant." He expressed hope for an eventual reconciliation in the fullness of truth. In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (1994) he wrote of Judaism: "This extraordinary people continues to bear signs of its divine election.... The insights which inspired the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* are finding concrete expression in various ways. Thus the two great moments of divine election—the Old and New Covenants—are drawing closer together.... The time when the people of the Old Covenant will be able to see themselves as part of the New is, naturally, a question left to the Holy Spirit. We, as human beings, try only not to put obstacles in the way."

The last word should perhaps be left to Pope Benedict XVI. In a set of interviews from the late 1990s, published under the title *God and the World,* he recognizes that there is "an enormous variety of theories" about the extent to which Judaism remains a valid way of life since the coming of Christ. As Christians, he says, we are convinced that the Old Testament is directed toward Christ, and that Christianity, instead of being a new religion, is simply the Old Testament read anew in Christ. We can be certain that Israel has a special place in God's plans and a special mission to accomplish today. The Jews "still stand within the faithful covenant of God," and, we believe, "they will in the end be together with us in Christ." "We are waiting for the moment when Israel, too, will say Yes to Christ," but until that moment comes all of us, Jews and Christians, "stand within the patience of God," of whose faithfulness we can rest assured.

Believing that the Son of God has lived among us, Christians will wish to make him known, loved, praised, confessed, and obeyed by as many people as possible. They will want the whole world to profit from Christ's teaching and to enjoy the fullness of sacramental life. But they will also strive to be patient in awaiting the appointed time. All of us, Jews and Christians alike, depend on God's patience as we strive to be faithful to the covenant and enter into its deepest meaning. FT

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What Philosophy Can Do

John Haldane

Until not so very long ago, many truly great minds devoted themselves to natural theology. In more recent times, however, the subject has receded as the Western world has come under the influence of styles of thinking, which, though varied, have in common a presumption that for now I will simply label "materialist naturalism." We face a genuine intellectual challenge in keeping alive issues that were once constitutive of philosophy and overlapped with the concerns of theologians—issues such as what it might mean to say that human beings are rational animals, and whether human rationality implies the existence of an immaterial principle, and how the existence of rational animals might point to the existence of a supreme being: in short, issues of mind, soul, and deity.

Yet there is a further problem with discussing these issues in a way that can engage the audience envisaged when, in 1885, Adam Lord Gifford left a bequest providing for "a Lectureship or Popular Chair for Promoting, Advancing, Teaching, and Diffusing the study of 'Natural Theology' in the widest sense of that term." The problem is the academic professionalization of thought, a process that has often resulted in a narrowing of discussion and a loss of comprehension. This trend has become a threat to the sharing of serious thoughts about serious matters among serious people—and a threat as well to the future well-being of those branches of academic study that have traditionally been looked to for illumination on matters of fundamental importance and common human interest.

I am not at all of the view that it reflects badly on philosophers if an intelligent person who has not engaged in philosophical studies is unable to understand the structure of their analyses or the formulation of their arguments. Protracted thought quite properly conjoins and articulates its conclusions in ways that are not always immediately intelligible. Similarly, methods may be developed whose practice and point can be hard and perhaps practically impossible for the untrained to grasp. Of itself, that does not imply a fault in those methods.

Here I am in agreement with Timothy Williamson, formerly of Edinburgh University and now of Oxford, who in a contribution to a recent volume entitled *The Future of Philosophy* writes: "A question may be easy to ask but hard to answer. Even if it is posed in dramatic and accessible terms, that does not entail that the reflections needed to select between rival answers are equally dramatic and accessible. Such contrasts are commonplace in other disciplines; it would have been amazing if they had not occurred in philosophy."

Williamson, however, then continues in a manner that might be judged to have passed from warranted defense to provocation: "Impatience with the long haul of technical reflection is a form of shallowness, often thinly disguised by histrionic advocacy of depth. Serious philosophy is always likely to bore those with short attention spans." Indeed, in a footnote he adds, "Popularization has its place, in philosophy as in physics, but should not be confused with the primary activity."

Certainly, the methods by which philosophers try to answer generally intelligible questions may be technical and the associated concepts obscure. But what is avoidable—and is thus culpable for not being avoided or discouraged—is the systematic development of speculative thought in ways that resist entry by nonprofessionals. Those who reasonably complain of this need not be histrionic advocates of depth, or burdened with short attention spans, or satisfied with "popularization" in place of the primary activity.

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It is no good to say that the problems have become technical or that discoveries have left the layman's understanding far behind. That would make sense if we were talking about physics or mathematics (and it may be significant that Williamson draws a parallel with the first of these), but we are concerned here with philosophy, broadly understood. Philosophical reflection begins with questions that intelligent and speculatively minded people ask. However protracted, specific, or technical the pursuit of answers may become, it should still be possible to formulate the substance of answers in terms that will be intelligible to intelligent and speculatively minded people—and not in terms that only fellow professionals (and only *some* of these) can understand.

Even worse than losing the power of communication is losing a sense of the importance of things to be communicated. This sometimes happens when philosophers forget philosophy's intellectual roots in human beings' common, pre-professional speculation—or, worse, forget what prompted an inquiry in the first place. So, for example, one may puzzle over whether it is better to think of a three-dimensional object—an ice cube, say—as *enduring* or *perduring* through an extended period of time: Is what exists at a given instant the whole of the object, a time-slice of it, or a time-point instantiation? These are genuine issues in metaphysics, as is the question of whether the cube is a substance, a cluster of co-instantiated properties, or a logical construction out of sense-data.

In thinking about such issues, however, it is tremendously important to remember that they arise because of pre-technical questions about identity—such as what makes the sapling of a decade ago and the tree of today one and the same plant, or what qualifies a modern building to be one and the same temple as existed on the same site hundreds of years previously.

Whatever significance such cases have, they are not, in the first instance at least, examples illustrative of developed philosophical theories. Rather, such questions naturally arise in the minds of the intellectually curious. I would go further and say that such curiosity is typically prompted and sustained by a background of practical interest. In the case of the plant's identity, it might be a matter of ownership or liability, and in the case of the temple, one of religious propriety or simple pride.

I am not suggesting that every time metaphysicians think about identity, they have to trace things back to pre-theoretical puzzlement. Rather, they should ask why the particular abstract issue is important. And it will not do for serious philosophy to answer that it is merely a satisfying theoretical puzzle. That is game playing, be it ever so cerebral. It profits a philosopher nothing if in gaining a method of intellectual problem-solving he loses the significance and importance of the original problem.

Another way of becoming detached and losing a sense of what might be communicated between professional philosophers and other thinking people is to substitute new issues of lesser or limited significance for old ones of great and extensive importance. In the eighteenth century Kant identified three postulates of practical reason: the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul. What is involved in being a "practical postulate" is not something I can go into now, but I want to note that Kant's selection is still close to the core preoccupations of philosophy through the ages.

For many thinking people these topics retain their fascination and significance. But in the two hundred years since Kant, they have become increasingly marginal to the mainstream of philosophy, and little now is said about them in the works that professionals produce for their colleagues. What accounts for this change?

A short answer might be that philosophers today, unlike their counterparts in earlier periods, no longer believe in God, immortal souls, or metaphysical freedom, and they have long tired of proving the non-existence of these. There may be something to this—but not, I think, very much. Pressed on these matters most professional philosophers, speaking *qua* philosophers, would be more likely to express agnosticism than nihilism about such possibilities, and no small number live, *qua* persons, as if they believe in them (or at least hold them as postulates).

The explanation for the gulf between the interest in such questions among non-philosophers and the neglect of them among academic thinkers lies elsewhere, I believe. It lies principally in a change, within academic circles, in the understanding of the nature and purpose of philosophy.

The ancient schools of thought—Platonic, Aristotelian, Cynic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Skeptic—commonly drew a distinction between "philosophy," meaning the moral and spiritual formation of the soul or person , and "discourse about philosophy," understood as the investigation of the nature of things and the modes of our knowledge of them. This distinction is related to the more familiar categories of practical and speculative philosophy. But whereas late-modern, recent, and contemporary thought has invested greatest effort and talent in the pursuit of *speculation*—in the form of epistemology, metaphysics and the philosophies of language and logic—the ancients give priority to *practice*, and, within that, to the cultivation of wis-

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dom and the development of what the Greeks called "untroubledness" (*ataraxia*).

Much more of the writing of antiquity, the middle ages, and the early modern period belongs to "philosophy" in the sense of the "practice of wisdom" than is now generally recognized. The French historian of philosophy, Pierre Hadot, has argued that the Western idea of spirituality, which we are apt to think of as entirely religious in source, may have originated not in the Desert Fathers of Christianity but in pre-existing philosophical traditions.

Indeed, he also suggests that this ancient conception of philosophy as practice need not be lost to us: "I think modern man can practice the spiritual exercises of antiquity, at the same time separating them from the philosophical or mythic discourse that came along with them. The same spiritual exercises can, in fact, be justified by extremely diverse philosophical discourses. These latter are nothing but clumsy attempts, coming after the fact, to describe and justify inner experiences whose existential security is not, in the last analysis, susceptible of any attempts at theorization or systematization."

Though my thinking about these issues owes something to Hadot, I believe that what he says here about the separability of theory and practice is mistaken in an important way. If a practice is to be more than a sensory training, like a relaxation exercise, then it will have an intentional structure that constrains and is constrained by what one believes. Just as one cannot intend to do what one holds to be impossible, so one's contemplative gaze is constrained by one's conception of what lies at its point of focus. This is connected to the difference between *meditation*, which need have no object, and *contemplation*, which requires (at least an intentional) one—and it is connected as well with the fact that religious practice in the absence of belief is felt to be a doubtful thing.

Hadot may be wrong to loosen the link between philosophy and philosophical discourse, but he does at least remind us that philosophers themselves once held them to be conjoined in overall philosophical practice. And while Hadot thinks we can have Stoic spirituality without Stoic logic and metaphysics, contemporary philosophers think we can and should have logic and metaphysics without Stoic spirituality—or any spirituality at all.

Since questions about God, the soul, and freedom lie within, or close to, the field of spirituality, even in the non-religious sense of the ancients, it is no surprise that these issues have tended to be left behind in favor of technical questions internal to the discourse of philosophy: questions about meaning, reference, logical consequence, epistemic justification, and so on. I am not suggesting that these are not philosophical issues—any more than a member of one of the ancient Athenian schools would have. But I am saying, as the ancients would, that the importance of these issues lies in the contribution they make to philosophy in the broader sense, which subsumes discourse and practice, and in which every thinking human being has an interest by virtue of being a thinking human being.

Someone might be tempted to reply that I am confusing philosophy with therapy or edification, and philosophers with therapists or sages. Certainly I want to avoid anything like the situation common in North American bookstores, in which metaphysics is taken to be a subdivision of the self-help category and books on aromatherapy sensual massage are shelved alongside others on dream interpretation, crystals, and theosophy. Once that absurdity is set aside, however, it is not clear just why we are supposed to reject the ancient understanding of philosophy as primarily concerned with the nature and destiny of man. Indeed, adapting the words of Timothy Williamson, one might say that impatience with the expectation of wisdom is a form of shallowness, often thinly disguised by rhetorical advocacy of discursive rigor.

To understand fully the neglect of mind, soul, and deity among academic thinkers, however, we must note a second change that has overtaken philosophy. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the discipline came under pressure from two opposing sides: on the one side, material science, whose goal is empirical explanation, broadly understood; on the other side, a kind of hermeneutic theorizing, the aim of which is subversive disclosure. The main responses to these pressures fall into four camps: a yielding to scientism, or a yielding to hermeneuticism, or a turning to historical accounts, or a swaying to and fro in a state of confusion about the nature and possibility of philosophical inquiry.

The scientistic and hermeneutical pressures upon philosophy have their origins in nineteenth-century theorizing. There is a model of explanation of which chemistry, structured by the table of chemical elements and the laws governing their interactions, is perhaps the clearest example. According to this model, the full range of diverse entities and attributes is explicable in terms of a finite base and mode of combination. Such a theory allows one to say in terms of a lower level why things are as they are at a higher level and how they will be if certain causes are applied. The picture of explanation is reminiscent of the classical philosophical notion of demonstration: the derivation, by means of purely deductive reasoning from indubitable premises, of certain conclusions.

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Modern scientists were not inclined to think that their subject could ever attain the status attributed by the ancients and medievals to a deductive system involving certain first principles. Not only did they recognize the difficulty of establishing such principles, but they realized that the formation and application of theories involved fallible judgment. Still, the success of chemistry posed a challenge to those wedded to the possibility of certain and universal knowledge—namely, philosophers.

The response to that challenge was varied. J.F. Ferrier of St. Andrews (originator of the term "epistemology") tried, for instance, to revive the methods of the rationalists and develop metaphysics as a deductive science—only to be ridiculed by J.S. Mill, who had imbibed the new scientific model. Mill also noted that real science was probabilistic and provisional, and he judged that philosophy had better accept that it is similarly fallible.

One could explore other examples of the diverse response to the challenge from science, but the result would be to establish a general point: In direct inversion of the earlier state of things, science was taken by many philosophers to be the model of organized knowledge. And in an effort to attain for their own subject something of the success and consequent prestige enjoyed by science in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many philosophers conformed the style of their inquiries to those of scientists. Anyone familiar with metaphysics, philosophy of language, and philosophy of mind, as well as metaethics and increasingly even ethical theory, will know what I mean. Philosophy in these fields has taken the form of creating theories to explain phenomena—where "explain" is closely tied to, and in some cases equivalent to, "prediction."

Certainly, that amounts to a change of subject from philosophy as the ancients conceived it. But before we can claim that this represents an error, we need to explore the question of what philosophy's purpose properly is. There is one large family of modern thought that would readily agree the scientific model of explanation is the wrong one for philosophy. This is the school of hermeneutic theories, which aims at subversive disclosure. In calling this approach "subversive," I do not mean that it has no positive aims. Indeed, typically such approaches see themselves as offering some kind of liberation, a freeing from illusion or delusion—an emancipatory mission one can hear in the phrase used by some of its advocates: "prophetic postmodernism."

An example may help one to see how these ideas work. According to Marx, the human world of thought and action is rooted in, and does not go beyond, its material base in economics. Social history is the record of class struggle. Marx was indebted to Hegel for the idea of historical dialectic, but where Hegel looked to art, religion, and philosophy to see the working out of a rational principle, Marx looked to economics and believed that what he saw there was the underlying reality of history in material evolution.

The extent to which this view is deterministic remains an interesting question, but, at any rate, the model of explanation seems, to those who hold it, to offer a form of subversive disclosure. Social structures, institutions, and practices may *appear* products of reason to the naive and deluded, but in reality they are effects of brute material force. At a certain level of resolution, differences between theories of this sort give way to striking resemblances. So Marxists and post-Marxists, Freudians and post-Freudians, Nietzscheans and post-Nietzscheans, Foucaultians and Derrideans, for all their differences, agree that the categories of philosophical and ethical analysis as traditionally understood are products of false consciousness—tales we tell ourselves and others in the interest of acquiring and retaining power and position in society.

Philosophers in the analytical tradition sometimes point out in a sentence or two that such theories commit the genetic or effective fallacies, as if this alone were enough to see them off as rival claimants to their position. The foundation of the charge is the idea that it is a confusion to identify the *content* of a claim with the *causes* or *effects* of its being made. Someone's believing that marriage or the fine arts are valuable may be the result of his having had this idea drummed into him, or of the fact that believing it makes things go better for him or for his interest group. But this has nothing to do with the question of whether the believed proposition is true.

Though insightful, this response can be question-begging, for it may be that there is indeed no truth at stake in the belief, in which case reference to cause and effect may be the only available explanation for why the belief is held. Equally, while the question of truth may remain, it may also be the case that what we think is more extensively the result of forces than of reasons, in which case the hermeneutic of subversive disclosure may provide the more relevant analysis.

In the face of this kind of challenge, some philosophers have yielded, giving up on traditional analysis and argumentation. Others continue to resist but do so by adding to the formal point of the genetic fallacy a studied indifference to the historical and social context of their own inquiries. This reaction suggests they may

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indeed be troubled by the possibility that these are determining factors—and so, in fear of that prospect, they bow their heads in conspicuous devotion to questions that could have no practical interest. Either response is an impoverishment of philosophy as traditionally practiced.

Some thinkers—believing it impossible to return philosophy to its earlier condition but filled with a distaste for the alternatives—have turned from the practice of philosophy to the study of its history. I am not one who draws a sharp line between these two. Indeed, I believe there is such a thing as "doing philosophy historically," or engaging philosophically with earlier times and figures. There is also such a thing as working within a philosophical tradition that is extended across times and cultures. (I myself stand in this relation to Aquinas and to the tradition of Thomism.) Still, it is one thing to retain confidence in philosophical practice as something continuing across the centuries and another to retreat into the study of the past in face of a challenge from the present to which one thinks there is no adequate reply.

Finally, there is the reaction of those who neither yield wholly to the challenges nor hope to escape the implications for their own practice by returning to a study of the past. I have in mind here those who sway to and fro in a state of confusion, not really knowing what to say about whether there are perennial philosophical issues or distinctive philosophical methods—which is to say, not really knowing whether there is such a subject as philosophy as traditionally conceived.

The phrase "philosophy as traditionally conceived" invites the question of what exactly philosophy is on this understanding. Part of the reply is *the integration of an answer to the question of how one ought to act as a human being in the world as one conceives it to be, with a true understanding of what it is to be a human being, of what it is for there to be a world, and of what is involved in thinking truly and acting rightly*. Such a reply gives the broad aims and content of philosophy, but it does not address an issue that has been felt most keenly in recent and contemporary times by philosophers. This is the very short question: What is philosophical thinking?

G.E.M. Anscombe, one of the finest philosophers of the twentieth century, characterized her subject as "thinking about the most difficult and ultimate questions." Memorable as this may be, it is, as the scholastics would say, an extrinsic denomination. It tells us about philosophy by saying again what it is concerned with. I suspect, however, that Anscombe's omission of a specification of the kind of thinking involved was not an oversight.

If I say that philosophy is abstract reflection, few will disagree, but that is because the phrase "abstract reflection" now connotes little more than rarefied thought. Historically, however, something definite was intended by this phrase. In the work of the medieval schoolmen, "abstraction" means thought removed from, and typically in the absence of, its immediate objects. This is in contrast to "intuitive cognition," which means thinking about a thing itself as and when it is before us. Suppose we say we are able to think of a thing when it is present—because it impresses itself upon the mind. How then is it possible to think of it when it is absent? The traditional answer is that we can do so by having formed a concept of that thing, and more likely a general concept of things of that sort.

Similarly, with regard to reflection, the scholastics distinguished two levels of thinking, terming them "acts of first intention" and "acts of second intention." In an act of first intention, one uses an abstracted concept to think of a thing or things answering to it—as when I now think of my family's cat, Molly. In an act of second intention, the mind turns back upon the concept itself and makes it the object of intellectual attention. So, in sum, abstract reflection is thinking about the contents of one's concepts.

This understanding—which has its roots in Plato and Aristotle, and is developed by Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, and Kant—is related to the practice of conceptual analysis that for many years defined the dominant mode of philosophy in the English-speaking world. And yet, when W.V.O. Quine and other twentieth-century American philosophers in the pragmatist tradition made their attack on the analytic-synthetic distinction, this notion of philosophy seemed to emerge mortally wounded.

In his 1704 *New Essays on the Human Understanding*, Leibniz drew a distinction between truths of reason and truths of fact, arguing that the former are necessary (or true in all possible worlds), while the latter are only contingently true (or true in this world). This seems to imply that truths of reason do not depend on any empirical fact while truths of fact depend upon something actually being thus or so. The distinction was enormously important in subsequent philosophy, paving the way for Hume and thereby for the logical positivism he inspired. Writing in his 1748 *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume makes the now-famous observation:

> All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit relations of idea, and matters of fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of geometry, algebra, and arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation that is either intuitively or demonstratively cer-

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> tain. . . . Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. . . . Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality.

These sentences provided Hume and his followers with a method of challenging what had hitherto been assumed about the veracity of reasoning with respect to morality and value more generally, and with respect to religion and metaphysics: Are they matters of *fact*? If so, point to them. Are they matters of *reason*? If so, show the contradiction involved in denying them. The fact-reason distinction also provided an answer to the question of how philosophy could ever be certain—by showing that it could be so only if it were confined to the analysis of ideas and of the necessary relations between them.

Quine's achievement was to show that this distinction is question-begging. But where does this leave us? If as Quine sometimes seemed to suggest, all truths (other than strictly logical ones) are empirical, then what is the future for philosophy? Since Quine was himself of the scientistic persuasion, he did not feel any problem in treating his practice as a form of rather general science. What, though, if one thinks there are genuinely metaphysical issues—such as those of the mind, soul, and deity—that do not belong to natural science?

The answer, I believe, lies in seeing that the possibility of philosophy as rational abstract reflection does not depend upon having a view of the scheme of truths and of modes of inquiry of the sort described by Hume and rejected by Quine. Here the phrase *abstract reflection* comes back into its own.

Suppose we say that concepts are formed in our dealings with reality and so are, in that respect, answerable to it. Even concepts built out of these reality-determined concepts have a connection back to actuality. Still, abstraction and reflection might remove one very far from particular things, and at that point one may be thinking about the most general and abstract possibilities. If what I have said is right, however, these scenarios will not be ungrounded possibilities. For example, to show that something is possible, it will not be sufficient to show that no logical contradiction follows from its supposition. Rather, one will have to look back to reality and ask what there determines how things can be. Along the way, there will continue to be conceptual truths to think about—not only those true merely by virtue of definition, but also those whose negation cannot be made sense of, given the body of beliefs, concepts, and conceptual connections we accept. On this understanding, thought and the world of common experience interpenetrate.

Philosophy, then, is the practical integration of an answer to the question of how one ought to act as a human being in the world as one conceives it to be, with a true understanding of what it is to be a human being, of what it is for there to be a world, and of what is involved in thinking truly and acting rightly. This integration is achieved through rational abstract reflection: the examination of the content of concepts derived from our engagement with reality—by which, through holistic interpretation, we arrive at rational truths, including ones relevant to answering questions about the existence and nature of mind, soul, and deity. FT

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Reading by Osmosis

Joseph Bottum

Well—

Mark Twain, Hart Crane,
and Ursula K. LeGuin—
We've mastered their books with a difficult trick:
We've read them outside in.

Percy B. Shelley and Machiavelli
and Norman Vincent Peale—
We've never tried opening one of their books.
We know them by their feel.

Does reading seem boring? Does reading seem hard?
Does reading seem too ferocious?
Then pick up a book and just give it a twirl.
You'll learn it by osmosis.

Because—

Osmosis is the mostest.
Osmosis is the best.
Osmosis is the closest thing to reading without rest.

Osmosis means absorbing.
Osmosis means so much.
Osmosis means we're soaking up the books we barely touch.

Harriet Beecher Stowe,
and Henry David Thoreau,
and Daniel Defoe,
and Jacques Rousseau,
and, oh,
hundreds of others we know—

We bobble, bounce, and throw them.
We never even look.
Osmosis means we know them without opening a book.

You know—

My sister osmoted *The Mill on the Floss*,
a wonderful book, and gave us a gloss:

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concerning a man named John Stuart Mill
with terrible teeth that made him quite ill.
Why—oh, why—wouldn't he floss?

My brother osmoted *The Lord of the Rings*,
a story of insects with thousands of wings—
or was that a book called *Lord of the Flies*?
Oh well, we're getting wise
by learning the things that osmosis now brings.

We'll juggle the books *Little Women* and *Men*
(they're all about dwarves in a mountainy den)
and throw in a copy of *Watership Down*
(concerning a boat and some sailors who drown),
and then—we'll run to the bookstore again.

But first—

Let's have a lesson from Doktor Derzenna,
who comes here today all the way from Vienna
to teach us the meaning of difficult things:

"Ach, vell, now ve begin—

Osmooosis, zis ist meaning
zat vhen two zings are leaning,
ze one into ze other tries to sneak.

Ze liquid on ze right,
zrough membranes overnight,
vill to ze left most definitely leak.

Vhile coming here I sat
on dictionaries fat
und learned all zis by riding on ze book!

But if you have neurosis,
mine genius ist hypnosis.
You *vill* mine eyes most deeply into look."

Ummmm—

Neurosis, hypnosis, psychosis, meiosis:
lovely words, in their way.
Cirrhosis, *necrosis*, and also *thrombosis*:
pleasing, but harder to say.

And *atrocious prognosis* of *misdiagnosis*
for aches of *precocious sclerosis*—
but words will find their *apotheosis*
remains the great *osmosis*.

We boast! We boast!
Osmosis is the most
phenomenal way
to read today
while eating jam and toast!

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We shout! We plead!
Osmosis we will need
for playing jacks
and munching snacks
and dancing while we read!

So—

Rebecca West and Edgar Guest:
We'll never be certain which one is the best.
Christopher Smart and Jean-Paul Sartre:
Just think of the wonders they have to impart.
Poets of genius like Julia Moore
and William McGonagall call for a roar.
William Shakespeare—Edward de Vere:
The difference isn't entirely clear.
John Donne and Thom Gunn:
Osmoting them both is a gallon of fun.

Somerset Maugham and L. Frank Baum,
Josiah Royce and James Joyce,
John Bunyan and Damon Runyon,
Graham Greene and Molly Keane,
Tom Paine and Ed McBain,
Ring Lardner and John Gardner,
Alice Munro and Arthur Rimbaud,
and, oh, hundreds of others we know.

Because—

Osmosis is the mostest.
Osmosis is the best.
Osmosis is the closest thing to reading without rest.

Osmosis means absorbing.
Osmosis means so much.
Osmosis means we're soaking up the books we barely touch.

We hold them to our noses.
We brush them with our clothes.
We're learning by osmosis when we tap them with our toes.

We pile them on the table.
We slide them on the floor.
We stack them into stairways and we climb up for some more.

We bobble, bounce, and throw them.
We never even look.
Osmosis means we know them without opening a book.

JOSEPH BOTTUM *is editor of* FIRST THINGS.

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Hitler's Hammer, the Church's Anvil

Justus George Lawler

Canonization was once a fairly obscure in-house Romish ritual for naming saints. But during the long reign of John Paul II, it somehow became a matter of international significance—often among people with no public connection to the Church. The 1998 canonization of the convert Edith Stein, for instance, had political repercussions among those who insisted the pope was stealing the memory of a Jewish Holocaust victim. Closer to the Vatican was the clamorous opposition to the beatification of Pius IX, who by a misreading of Matthew 15 was alleged to have called Jews "dogs," and the more indignant outbursts, even by Israeli politicians, over the projected beatification of Pius XII, allegedly silent during World War II.

More of the same began on October 9, when Benedict XVI beatified one of his own countrymen, Clemens August von Galen, who in 1933 was appointed bishop of Münster, the capital of Westphalia—the first new member of the German hierarchy after the rise of Hitler. Not coincidentally, a distant cousin of von Galen, Bishop Konrad von Preysing, would be appointed two years later to Berlin, the capital of the Reich. The two were the youngest bishops and only non-cardinals invited to Rome in 1937 to participate in drafting the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* condemning German racist dogma.

Von Galen was known in his time for attacking in 1934 the bible of Nazi racism, Alfred Rosenberg's *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. In the following year, the bishop vigorously objected to the Nazi provincial governor about the planned appearance of Rosenberg at a party rally in Münster: "The overwhelmingly Christian population of Westphalia would regard this as a downright provocation showing contempt for their most cherished convictions." At the rally Rosenberg personally attacked the bishop. The next day twenty thousand citizens accompanied von Galen in a religious procession, followed by a fiery address in which he declared that he would never succumb to the demands of racists. This was the first public expression of his episcopal motto: *Nec laudibus nec timore* ("Neither for praise nor out of fear"), and the genesis of his reputation as "the lion of Münster."

During the war, von Galen became internationally celebrated when he delivered a series of sermons repeatedly attacking the Gestapo by name and condemned the Nazi "euthanasia" program for so-called incurables. Read at all Church services in Westphalia, leafleted by the British air force over every major German city, and broadcast by the BBC in five languages, the sermons ultimately reached an estimated forty million people. Henri de Lubac—a Jesuit member of the French resistance who published this "anvil sermon" of von Galen's in the underground *Témoignage Chrétien*—observed at the time: "If there is one case where the duty to oppose injustice must be fulfilled, it is certainly the extreme anti-Semitic measures imposed by Hitlerism."

In the anvil sermon—with its refrain of "Become hard! Remain firm!"—the bishop declared:

> At this moment we are the anvil rather than the hammer. Other men, strangers, renegades, are hammering us. . . . The anvil cannot and need

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> not strike back: it must only be firm, only hard! . . . However hard the hammer strikes, the anvil stands firmly and silently in place and will long continue to shape the objects forged upon it. If it is sufficiently tough and firm and hard the anvil will last longer than the hammer. The anvil represents those who are unjustly imprisoned, those who are driven out and banished for no fault of their own.

The Gauleiter of nearby Holland attributed to von Galen's sermons the Dutch bishops' opposition to the deportation of Jews. The White Rose student group—whose five leaders, with their professor, would be executed by the Nazis—was also inspired by the copies of von Galen's words in the leaflets dropped by the British, and they reprinted thousands of their own, along with others decrying the anti-Semitism of the regime. Helmuth von Moltke, the guiding spirit of the Kreisau Circle, wrote his wife Freya that she should "read the sermons aloud because that brings out their great drive." The Jewish survivor, Victor Klemperer, noted in his diary on November 2, 1941: "Headmaster Voss . . . told us that the Bishop of Münster, Count Galen, had preached publicly against the Gestapo and the killings of the mentally infirm. The bishop had not been arrested on the grounds that 'one does not want to make any martyrs,' in truth, because they had 'not dared to.'"

It was in the sermon on euthanasia that von Galen spoke of how he had written to officials of the government complaining of the fate of "incurables." From the pulpit of his cathedral church, he told his diocesans:

> I have received no information. . . . I was protesting in the strongest terms. It had no effect. These unfortunate patients are to die . . . because in the judgment of some official body, on the decision of some committee, they have become "unworthy to live," because they are classed as "unproductive members of the national community." . . . If the principle is established that one is entitled to kill his unproductive fellow-man, then woe betide all of us when we become aged and infirm! If it is legitimate to kill unproductive members of the community, woe betide the disabled who have sacrificed their health or their limbs in the productive process! If unproductive men and women can be disposed of by violent means, woe betide our brave soldiers who return home with major disabilities, as cripples, as invalids!

The entire statement makes abundantly clear that the bishop was not referring to traditional Catholic doctrine that extraordinary means need not be used to sustain life, but to state-enforced executions mainly of the mentally ill as well as of "disabled persons who are no longer capable of work, of cripples, the incurably ill, and the aged and infirm." But the sentence about "our brave soldiers" offers an insight into the nature of the German resistance. John Lukacs highlighted the point in his book *The Hitler of History*: "Many of the most principled opponents of Hitler were traditionalists. . . . This was as true of Stauffenberg and his circle in 1944 [which had long planned the assassination of Hitler] . . . and of untold examples of patriots and religious men and women throughout Germany and Austria."

Nonetheless, one of Lukacs' former students has condemned von Galen as "an antidemocrat, antiliberal, antimodern man." That student, B.A. Grieche-Polelle, nonchalantly asks while discussing the sermons: "Was martyrdom a reasonable expectation for von Galen?" Her response is chilling: "Not many high-ranking Catholic clergymen were in concentration camps." In fact, records exist showing that Hitler was dissuaded from taking action against the bishop only because it would arouse the "entire population of Westphalia against the war." As a consequence Hitler vowed to execute the bishop "after victory." Nevertheless, few would question that the bishop had all the shortcomings of his background and his era—a traditionalist in religion and a loyalist in politics—as well as all the strengths of his high principles.

Born in 1878, the scion of a long line of minor nobility and major churchmen traceable back to the sixteenth-century prince-bishops of Münster, he was by birth a conservative and a patriot. As a youth he was raised in the Catholic siege-mentality prevalent during the years of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* against the Church, though in von Galen's case that mentality was tempered by the heritage of his great-uncle, W.E. von Ketteler, the bishop of Mainz, a forward-looking social reformer who strongly affected Pope Leo XIII's overtures to the modern world, particularly as represented by the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. (Among the "new things" Leo advocated were the rights of laborers to a living wage and to a voice in their working conditions.) The influence of von Ketteler was reflected in von Galen's two decades as a pastor in Berlin where he was referred to as "the father of the poor." Even while a bishop, his persistence in seeing the Church as "under siege" was a factor in strengthening his resolve to oppose the regime.

Von Galen's sermons were specifically singled out by Pius XII as examples to be emulated by the German episcopate, in accord with his principle that each bishop, knowing best the conditions in his diocese

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during wartime, should follow his own conscience regarding acts against the regime. In the event, the three German opposition prelates, von Galen of Münster, von Preysing of Berlin, and Josef Frings of Cologne (whose theological adviser at the Second Vatican Council was the future Benedict XVI) were all made cardinals after the war, as were the French anti-fascist bishops. Von Galen died a few weeks after his elevation, certainly in part because of the toll taken by years of living under the strain of opposition to a ruthless government—which, however, had not hesitated to imprison his brother Franz in Sachsenhausen, partially as a way of further harassing the bishop.

The religious philosopher, Josef Pieper, who as a young man knew the bishop, noted that even two years after the sermons, people "feared that any day 'something could happen to him'; and he himself was prepared for the worst." The dating of this comment would have been close to the time when Carl Goerdeler, former mayor of Leipzig and Protestant leader of the German Resistance, visited von Galen and was delighted to find the bishop "very sympathetic" to the goals of the Resistance.

The bishop's position was in sharp contrast to that of Konrad Adenauer. Emmi Bonhoeffer whose husband, Klaus, and brother-in-law, Dietrich, were both executed, maintained that, "Adenauer had a very guilty conscience toward the *Widerstand*, because at the crucial moment he rebuffed Goerdeler who had tried to win him over. He presumably stuck with Talleyrand's motto: . . . *'J'ai vécu'*—'I survived.'" Carl Goerdeler did not survive.

Grieche-Polelle, who has written the only biography of the bishop in English, a reworking of her dissertation from Rutgers, *Bishop von Galen: German Catholicism and National Socialism* (2002), is widely quoted as the press analyze, assess, and carp over the bishop's October beatification. Because Grieche-Polelle's skimpy volume of 170 pages of text and 28 pages of notes is so readily digestible, not to mention that its subject is so relentlessly debunked ("Saintly Bishop Exposed"), it may well have an impact on popular opinion comparable to that of the book version of Rolf Hochhuth's anti-Pius XII play *The Deputy*.

Grieche-Polelle sets the tone at the beginning of *Bishop von Galen*, where a religious commonplace instilled in the young von Galen by his family and teachers, "human authority is a reflection of divine rule," is followed by this ominous *non sequitur*: "Thus the religious *Führerprinzip* coincided with the Nazis' secular *Führerprinzip*." The opinion startles not so much by its anachronism—exploiting a term Goebbels introduced into the Nazi lexicon decades later—but by its equation of a pious truism with a fascist slogan. The term was highlighted by the controversy over Martin Heidegger during the 1980s, where the "principle" was crucial to the embrace of Nazism in his rectorial address—with staged outbursts of *Sieg Heil!*—and also as leitmotif of his entire philosophical enterprise. Grieche-Polelle's dissertation is the first work to relate the careers of the caitiff philosopher and the courageous prelate.

Chronological gaffe is again joined to non sequitur when Grieche-Polelle portentously notes that "by 1934 visitors entering Münster were greeted by a sign, 'Trespassing of this community by Jews is unwanted.'" Apart from the sheer gratuitousness, the accusation ignores the fact that von Galen had become bishop only late in 1933.

This eclipse of chronology continues when the author complains that the papal encyclical on Nazism, *Mit brennender Sorge*—which had to be smuggled into Germany—"did not endorse Catholic participation in an open rebellion against the government." The reader cannot but wonder: participation in what "open rebellion" in 1937? A more recent time-warping chronicler, Peter Godwin in *Hitler and the Vatican* (2004), cites Grieche-Polelle as source of the criticism that the bishop denounced "in well-publicized sermons abuses by the Gestapo and the judicial murder of 'euthanasia' with no reference to the Holocaust." But the sermons were delivered within six weeks of the German invasion of Russia, and no observer in that short time had the least idea of mass exterminations, much less of holocausts.

The book's narrative bias is worse even than its mathematical blunders. Concerning the confrontation with Rosenberg, Grieche-Polelle remarks: "Although the bishop's words were strong, he was not risking very much in that the neopagan ideology of Rosenberg was never officially incorporated into the platform of National Socialism; therefore attacks against his writings were technically not attacks against the Nazi state." Comparably picayune is her comment on the anvil sermon: "Although the speech does carry a strong denunciation of some of the immoral practices of the state, it did not attack Hitler or the nation specifically. Instead it focused on the action of the Gestapo." The clinching instance of petty niggling concerns the peroration to the bishop's first sermon: "Therefore as a German, an honorable citizen, a representative of the Christian religion, a Catholic Bishop, I exclaim: 'We demand Justice!'" Grieche-Polelle's gloss: "It is interesting that he emphasized his Germanness first and his Christianity second."

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"Germanness" is not something Grieche-Polelle herself emphasizes, as she consistently mistranslates crucial passages. The bishop received an anonymous letter about crimes in the East from a man who described himself as "of German blood who had fought for the Fatherland in the Great War." Grieche-Polelle comments: "Then he asked the pivotal question, 'Will you stand up and be our helper?' . . . He did not stand up." In point of fact, the letter, which bespeaks both earnestness and pathos, is replete with expressions of respect regarding the bishop—which makes its "pivotal question" so jarring that the reader instinctively thinks this man would not ask that question. Nor did he. The question, "*Ob uns ein Helfer ersteht?*" is a plaintive outburst, "Will anyone arise to help us?" The distraught man concluded by saying it was a "crazy" (*irre*) hope that motivated his anonymous letter.

In a comparably glaring but more intrinsically significant distortion, Grieche-Polelle alters a statement of Pius XII to the German hierarchy so that it means the opposite of what the pope actually said. "Although bishops such as von Galen who championed the cause of God and the Holy Church would always have his support," she writes, the pope "nevertheless 'require[s] you and your colleagues not to protest.'" This is referenced correctly to the second volume of *Actes et documents du Saint Siège relatifs à la seconde guerre mondiale*, but in that volume the actual remarks state: "But that the bishops, who have so courageously and flawlessly like Bishop von Galen championed the cause of God and Holy Church, will always enjoy Our support—that is something about which We need not give you and your colleagues assurance." There is absolutely no way this can be translated as "requiring you and your colleagues not to protest."

Equally egregious is the author's obliviousness to factual data. According to her, "Dr. G.K.A. Bell, Anglican bishop of Chicester" (*sic*) met von Galen after the war in order "to form a Christian state" in Germany. This intention, the author avers, was "unaltered by the full revelations of what racist anti-Semitism had wrought" during the Hitler era. The comment about Bishop Bell and his alleged anti-Semitism points up the author's remarkable unawareness of major figures who were central to events during the wartime era. Bishop Bell was the leading ecumenist in England, a close friend of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a counselor of Churchill (who blocked his becoming Anglican primate), a universally admired mediator who sought to launch a peace initiative even during the war, a leader of the postwar anti-nuclear movement—and, finally, hero of Hochhuth's other wartime drama, *Soldiers*. The basis for the latter was his opposition to Churchill's city-busting Operation Gomorrah (specifically, in Hochhuth's play, to the bombing of Dresden, a theme for which Hochhuth was, oddly, indebted to his long-time friend the Holocaust denier, David Irving).

The source of Grieche-Polelle's disdain for both bishops is what she calls (after Claudia Koontz) "selective opposition" or "single-issue dissent." For Grieche-Polelle, such opposition or dissent becomes the omnibus rationale for micrometrically judging the merits of antagonists of the regime during the war. But this means that in addition to stigmatizing Bishop Bell for ignoring what "racist anti-Semitism had wrought," the bishop of Chichester must be further condemned on the grounds of "selective opposition" since—although he spoke out vigorously against the bombing of German cities—he failed to advocate destroying the death camps where Jews were being gassed.

In fact, jargon like "single-issue dissent" is the author's mask for the accusation of anti-Semitism—a depravity akin to what Andrew Napolitano has called a "favored crime," in which merely to be accused is tantamount to being guilty, and therefore a crime whose gravity automatically exonerates the accuser of intentional distortions. Certainly it is true that von Galen, like the martyred Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was tainted by the Christian "teaching of contempt" for Jews and Judaism. Up to the 1950s this teaching was conventional Christian belief, and unfortunately neither martyrs nor bishops were untouched by the shadow side of their tradition. But clearly, for neither this martyr nor this bishop did that imply approval of the extermination of Jews—as Dietrich Bonhoeffer's prison meditations and the bishop's sermons make clear.

After the failure to assassinate Hitler, Himmler compared the future fate of Bishop von Galen to that of Count von Stauffenberg, who had been executed for his role in that aborted attempt. Grieche-Polelle haughtily observes: "Stauffenberg gave his life for his conscience. Von Galen appeared to be ready to become a martyr too, but only for what he deemed a Catholic cause."

What goes unexplained is why opposition to the Gestapo or to the killing of "the unproductive" is a uniquely Catholic cause. But this author's own "single-issue" preoccupation seems itself to be highly selective. Von Stauffenberg's failed effort of July 20, 1944, was exactly three years after the bishop's "anvil sermon." By that date in 1944, the death factories had taken most of their gruesome toll, which was soon to include the remnant of Hungarian

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Jews. Had Hitler been killed by Stauffenberg, it might have brought down the regime, but it would have had little effect on the Holocaust. What Grieche-Polelle does not seem to realize, in her zeal to indict von Galen, is that brave men and women with varying backgrounds and interests often have different motives and goals that ultimately may work toward some common larger end—even when individual efforts fail.

By her standards, the journalist William Shirer would have been right when he disdainfully said of the executed Count von Moltke: "He had the courage to talk . . . but not to do." But Countess von Moltke later said of the assassination attempt, "It did not get rid of Hitler, and it got rid of all the people who had worked against Hitler. That's what he thought would happen, and it did." The result was that the elite of a future government was wiped out, and politicians like Konrad Adenauer later came into power.

In an oft-cited postwar statement, picked up also by Grieche-Polelle, Adenauer called the German bishops' conduct "inexcusable." "It would not be a bad thing if they had all been put in prison or concentration camps as a result." But during the war, Adenauer, though certainly anti-Nazi, rejected the resistance. When he became chancellor after the war, his secretary of state was the Nazi co-author, interpreter, and implementer of the Nuremberg racist laws, Hans Globke; and Adenauer's criticism of the Reich contrasted sharply with that of President Theodor Heuss, who was passionately condemnatory.

Nor were there any national commemorations of the July 20 Putsch until 2004, because earlier governments were ambiguous about honoring people who had been condemned as traitors. Freya von Moltke, who participated in the sixtieth-anniversary event, noted of the Kreisauers: "At the peak of Hitler's triumphs [after the fall of Poland and France], that's when the Circle began. . . . Even though we had no success and even though we were weak, all of us who stood against Hitler kept European humanity alive in Germany."

But the issue of assassination itself had been controversial from the very beginning. Von Moltke himself—a student of the American *Federalist Papers*—opposed it as a besmirching of the ideal republic he envisioned. His main opponent in the Kreisau group, Adam von Trott zu Solz, who through contacts in England had tried to persuade the British to moderate their terms for peace, also proved to be wrong in his insistence that Hitler be assassinated, as did Dietrich Bonhoeffer after much reflection and, at a later date, the Jesuit Alfred Delp. All were executed. Bishop von Preysing of Berlin, also an active Kreisauer, was tireless but ineffectual in trying to persuade the German bishops' conference to make a stronger statement about the abuses of the regime, but it seems unlikely that he opposed the assassination—even though the Vatican's concordat with Germany explicitly forbade political interference by the Church.

And yet the Church was involved since the issues were of life and death. Von Galen had already interfered vigorously and was favorable to the goals of the resistance. Von Preysing was joined by Bishop Johannes Dietz of Fulda and Augustinus Rösch, the Jesuit provincial of Bavaria (who after the assassination attempt managed to evade the Gestapo for six months and ultimately survive), with Cardinal von Faulhaber on the periphery making plans for the role of the Church in the new state. Given the membership of high churchmen, it is not surprising that Pius XII, on being informed of the intended coup, agreed as he had done in 1939 to act as mediator with the Allies if the assassination were successful. It was with a view to the aftermath of the coup—and not the fiction of Pius' obsession with Germany—that led him to oppose publicly the Allied insistence on unconditional surrender.

There is no doubt that the moral issue of tyrannicide was much debated by the Kreisauers, and that the definitive work defending its legitimacy—*De Rege et Regis Institutione* by the seventeenth-century Jesuit, Juan de Mariana—was introduced into that debate. All this was known, probably through torture, to the infamous hanging judge, Roland Freisler, whose rant, at the trial of Father Delp, von Moltke mocked in a letter to his wife: "the storm of abuse that came down on the Catholic clergy and the Jesuits: assents to tyrannicide—Mariana; illegitimate children, anti-German attitudes, etc., etc. All this with bellowing of middling quality." Given the oblique participation of the pope, it is not surprising that the morality of tyrannicide remains in contemporary theology an open question, whereas up until the twentieth century the consensus (*contra* Thomas Aquinas and Francisco Suarez) was that it was not allowable under any conditions—or when allowed, under rigidly limited circumstances, it required a mandate from legitimate authority. The growth of democracy altered that last precondition.

Additionally, there were political differences among the conspirators, including as major participants the military and the diplomatic services whose members shared the prejudices of their professions. Many of them had little interest in von Moltke's future republic—their code name for the conspiracy was *Walküre*, not *Rienzi*—but were fearful about Germany's defeat

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and the likelihood of subsequent revolutionary havoc. Carl Goerdeler, who had tendered the invitation to Adenauer, wrote a summary constitution of a renewed monarchic Germany, while a fellow conspirator and close friend of Stauffenberg, Julius Leber, was planning for a leftist socialist society.

It is now immaterial who was right and who was wrong. The lasting truth of significance is that all of these figures and hundreds others lived out von Galen's motto: "Neither for praise nor out of fear." To denigrate them now because they had different approaches, opportunities, and goals when attacking an evil regime is truly to exercise "selective opposition" and arrogantly to impose a "single issue" as the standard of heroism for people living under circumstances inconceivable to us today.

In her biography, Grieche-Polelle, referring with disdain to the now beatified Clemens August von Galen, writes of "the legend of the grand resister"—presumably with the grand inquisitor waiting in the wings. But few would tout the bishop as a *grand* hero; rather they would see him as he saw himself: as a man simply doing his duty in opposing a depraved system. That Hitler was defeated, and thus could not make a martyr of von Galen, does not erase the bishop's bravery. Appropriate here are the words of Emmi Bonhoeffer: "I wouldn't go so far as to accept the notion that men can make progress only by martyrdom. In any case, walking the straight and narrow does not come cheaply, and it is always worthwhile knowing the sacrifices it will cost. The sacrifices could be worthwhile just for that." FT

Walking the Sea

Walking the sea, I think of the small diaspora
of the hermit crab, and the unshackled shell.
I think of the sealed spiral, niche and cupola
the nautilus crafts as if the ether windowed spirit level.
I think of the mollusk that lets the coffined pearl,
blind eye white as albumen—grow.

Walking the sea, I think of the skull, and the curl
of organs in the Canopic jar: glassy vertigo,
staring in, stares back, the afterlife or another death.
Walking the sea I see in the ropey egg cases
the umbilical cord's birthed death; my little faulty breath
that displaces my mother's linked necklaces

of veins and blood. Vowels I cannot swallow,
I hear again in my first word, *mama*—all the diasporas to follow.

Valerie Wohlfeld

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Books in Review

Law & Language

Law's Quandary
by Steven D. Smith
Harvard University Press, 222 pages, $45

Reviewed by Antonin Scalia

Stephen Smith takes us on a lively, thought-provoking romp through the philosophy of law. Like most romps, it has no destination, but the experience is worth it.

Although Smith protests at the outset of *Law's Quandary* that he is "a law professor, not a metaphysician (or even a philosopher)," he cannot honestly be absolved of that sin. He is, after all, co-director of the Institute for Law and Philosophy at the University of San Diego, and he displays an impressive familiarity with the scholarship, from ancient to modern, bearing upon the philosophy of law. By the time this book ends, it has, with a minimum of cant and a maximum of wit, plausibly consigned the modern part of that scholarship to error (or, at least, incomprehensibility)—from Holmes to Pound, Llewellyn to Dworkin, Posner to Bork (and Scalia, honored as I am to be condemned in such eminent philosophical company), with many others in-between. Even Plato, it develops, leaves much to be desired. The only philosophers to survive Smith's critical scrutiny are Socrates (because he, like Smith himself, did not propose a solution but only called attention to a problem) and what Smith calls the "classical school" of legal philosophy, stretching from Aquinas through Coke, Blackstone, and Story (because that school, unlike all the others, had a coherent theory of law, though it unfortunately rested upon "theistic metaphysics").

Early on in its analysis, *Law's Quandary* sets forth three "ontological inventories"—three categories describing what we in twenty-first-

Antonin Scalia *is an associate justice on the United States Supreme Court.*

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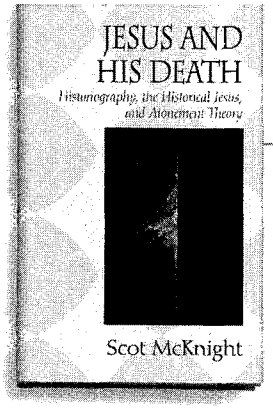

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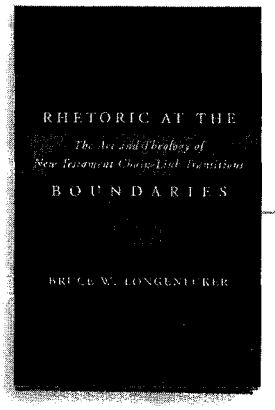

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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
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century America "believe to be real": everyday experience, science, and religion. The last is excluded from the book's ensuing analysis because of the "norm prescribing that religious beliefs are inadmissible in academic explanations." Law's quandary, to which the title of the book refers, is this:

> Since at least the time of Holmes, lawyers and legal thinkers have scoffed at the notion that "the law" exists in any substantial sense or that it is not reducible into our discourse and practices. Law is not a "brooding omnipresence in the sky." We have rejected any such conception of law . . . because we perceive, correctly, that our ontological inventories (or at least those that prevail in most public and academic settings) could not provide any intelligible account of . . . this "preexisting thing called 'The Law.'" At the same time, . . . [there is] cogent evidence suggesting that we still do believe in "the law." . . . Our actual practices seem pervasively to presuppose some such law: our practices at least potentially might make sense on the assumption that such a law exists, and they look puzzling or awkward or embarrassing without the assumption.

The practices to which this passage alludes include the retroactivity of judicial decisions, even novel or unexpected ones. We apply the new rule that those decisions announce to conduct that occurred before the decisions were rendered. This makes sense on the classical view that judicial decisions merely "discover" the law but not on the view that they *make* the law.

Similarly, we have a practice of relying upon judicial precedent (so-called *stare decisis*), which is no less

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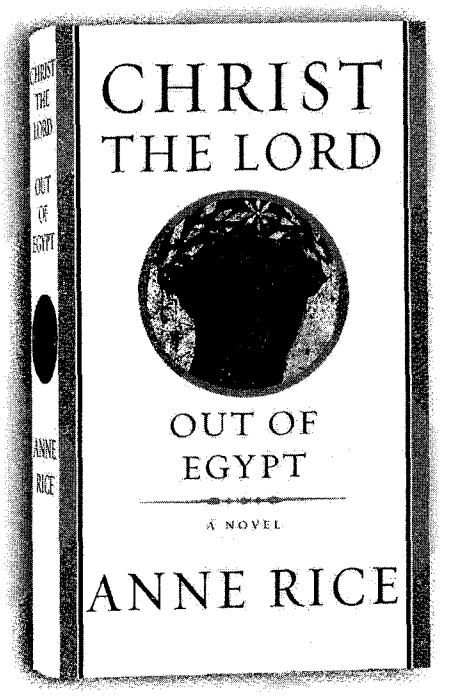
extensive post-Holmes than pre-Holmes. That made sense in a legal system that regarded judicial opinions as "evidence" of what "the law" is. It makes no sense in a legal system that regards the judicial opinion *itself* as "the law," any more than it would make sense to bind today's legislature to the laws adopted in the past.

And finally, the fact that the "holding" of a judicial opinion—the portion of its text or the aspect of its disposition that binds later courts—is almost infinitely expandable or contractable, ranging from the mere prescription that these particular facts produce this particular result to the broad "rationale" expressed by the court to justify that prescription. This is an inconvenience, perhaps, but not a contradiction in a system that regards judicial opinions as mere "evidence" of "the law"; in a system in which the judicial opinion *is* the law it produces law that is virtually lawless.

Law's quandary, then, is that we believe like legal realists but act as though there were indeed some omnipresent, overarching law. Smith proceeds to discuss why the broad variety of twentieth-century jurisprudential movements—sociological jurisprudence, legal realism, legal process, law and policy (including law and economics), law and society, law and philosophy, critical legal studies, law and literature, feminist jurisprudence, critical race theory, legal pragmatism and, oh yes, textualism—try but fail to resolve this quandary, try but fail to explain "how the law makes sense without 'the law.'"

Some of these movements rely upon one or another version of so-called "reader-response" theory, which in its purest form holds that the meaning of words is what they convey to the particular reader. That is conclusively enough refuted as a viable theory for law, Smith thinks (or for anything else, I think), by the



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consideration that "every reading would be as valid as every other reading." Other jurisprudential movements require reference to a real or hypothesized author; Smith agrees this is necessary in theory, but finds none of the leading candidates for authorship acceptable. The actual legislators often intended conflicting meanings, and often had no intent at all on the particular question at issue. The hypothetical "normal speaker of English" may serve for "some of law's more modest . . . functions," but "has no apparent qualification to perform law's more ambitious functions," such as "establishing social policy" or resolving "high-level disputes." As for a hypothetical author "wiser and more articulate than we are": If he is indeed that, then we cannot know his mind, and we will merely "project onto him" our own intentions.

As interesting as Smith's analysis is, it essentially addresses a legal system that is now barely extant, the system that Holmes wrote about: the common law. That was a system in which there was little legislation, and in which judges *created* the law of crimes, of torts, of agency, of contracts, of property, of family and inheritance. And just as theories such as the Divine Right of Kings were necessary to justify the power of monarchs to make law through edicts, some theory was necessary to justify the power of judges (as agents of the King) to make law through common-law adjudication. That theory was the "brooding omnipresence" of an unwritten law that the judges merely "discovered."

But democracy has overtaken all that. Modern governments, or modern governments in the West at least, are thought to derive their authority from the consent of the governed, and the laws they prescribe are enacted by the people's representatives. Such a system is quite incompatible with the making (or the "finding") of law by judges—and most especially by unelected judges. Even in state courts, it is a rare case that does not involve interpretation of an enacted text. And federal courts have, since the decision of *Erie R.R. v. Tomkins* in 1939, completely abjured common-law powers except in a few limited fields such as admiralty; they do not pretend to have the power either to "find" *or* to "make" a law unevidenced by enacted text or (in cases coming within their diversity jurisdiction) by the text of state judicial decisions.

The contradictions that Smith finds in a system of common-law-

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sans-brooding-omnipresence do not exist in a system of enacted law, properly applied. It is entirely logical for interpretation of an enacted text to be retroactive—applicable to conduct that occurred before the interpretation (but not before the enactment)—since the text *always* meant what the court said, just as in the pre-Holmesian system the brooding omnipresence had always contained what the court "discovered." As for giving precedential effect to prior decisions (*stare decisis*), that is merely an administrative and social convenience: Courts do not have the time to reconsider every legal issue anew, and citizens cannot confidently plan their actions if what the Supreme Court has said a statute means today is not in all probability what the Supreme Court will say it means tomorrow. (Some modern systems, of course, have not thought this administrative and social convenience worth the trouble, and, in principle at least, forgo the doctrine of *stare decisis*.) And since it is just an administrative and social convenience, the doctrine of *stare decisis* is not applied rigidly, as it used to be at common law. As for the fact that the "holding" of a case is difficult to determine: that poses no problem in principle, since the case is not the law but merely an interpretation of the law. Its indeterminacy may lessen the administrative and social convenience of *stare decisis*, but does not contradict any premise upon which the law rests.

I have said that the contradictions do not exist in a system of enacted law *properly applied*, because there are means of converting democratically enacted law (or democratically ratified constitutional provisions) into a sort of common law prescribable by judges. We have done this with the federal Constitution. One such means is simply reading text to say what it does not say—so that the assurance that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law becomes an assurance that fundamental liberties shall not be eliminated; of course, it is the judges who get to decide, in common-law fashion, what liberties are fundamental.

Another means consists of asserting that a text does not retain the meaning it had when it was adopted but, rather, changes meaning to conform with current practices, or current attitudes, or (as the Supreme Court has explicitly said with regard to the Eighth Amendment's proscription of cruel and unusual punishment) whatever a majority of the jus-

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tices thinks best. Thus interpreted, the Equal Protection Clause, for example, which at the time of its enactment plainly was understood not to prohibit a state from restricting marriage to persons of opposite sex, could now contain that prohibition. Depends on what the judges think. The constitutional "questions" that Smith says conventional legal discourse does not really answer—whether states can criminalize abortion, whether faith-based initiatives are permissible, whether public universities can adopt affirmative-action programs, whether a state military college can admit only men, whether there is a right to assisted suicide—are all questions that only arise if text is distorted or text is regarded as having an evolving meaning.

THE PORTION OF Smith's book I least understand—or most disagree with—is the assertion, upon which a regrettably large portion of the analysis depends, that it is a "basic ontological proposition that persons, not objects, have the property of being able to mean." "Textual meaning," Smith says, "must be identified with the semantic intentions of *an author*—and . . . without an at least tacit reference to an author we would not have a meaningful text at all, but rather a set of meaningless marks or sounds." "Legal meaning depends on the (semantic) intentions of an author."

To prove his point, Smith recounts a hypothetical case devised by Paul Campos:

> While walking in the desert near the border between the United States and Mexico, you come across marks in the sand forming the figures "REAL," and you wonder what these marks mean. Your first step will be to guess whether the marks were made by an English-speaking or Spanish-speaking agent. If you think the marks were made by an English speaker, you probably will interpret them to mean something like "real" in the sense of "actual" or "existing." If you suppose instead that the marks were made by someone speaking Spanish, then you will understand them to mean something like the English term "royal." But if you think the marks were made by no one, and were instead simply the fortuitous effect of wind on the desert sand, then you will not suppose that the marks actually mean anything at all; they are merely a strange accident devoid of meaning.

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The example is inapt because it assumes a reader of the symbol who functions under two different symbolic conventions, English and Spanish. But when we approach the text of a statute or Constitution, we know what linguistic convention is in play. Try this hypothetical instead: Two persons who speak only English see sculpted in the desert sand the words "LEAVE HERE OR DIE." It may well be that the words were the fortuitous effect of wind, but the message they convey is clear, and I think our subjects would not gamble on the fortuity.

Smith confuses, it seems to me, the question whether words convey a concept from one intelligent mind to another (communication) with the question whether words produce a concept in the person who reads or hears them (meaning). The bridegroom who says "I do," intending by that expression to mean "I do not," has not succeeded in communicating his intent; but what he has said unquestionably *means* that he consents to marriage. As my desert example demonstrates, symbols (such as words) can convey meaning even if there is no intelligent author at all. If the ringing of an alarm bell has been established, in a particular building, as the conventional signal that the building must be evacuated, it will convey that meaning even if it is activated by a monkey. And to a society in which the conventional means of communication is sixteenth-century English, *The Merchant of Venice* will be *The Merchant of Venice* even if it has been typed accidentally by a thousand monkeys randomly striking keys.

Smith claims his assertion that "legal meaning depends on the (semantic) intentions of an author" is "a modest and commonsensical claim." It strikes me as an extravagant and nonsensical one. That is why Humpty Dumpty's statement of the claim ("When *I* use a word it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less") has always been regarded—by all except Carroll's game-playing Logicians—as hilarious nonsense. Alice and I believe that words, like other conventional symbols, do convey meaning, an objective meaning, regardless of what their author "intends" them to mean—unless, of course, the text announces that it is departing from conventional meaning ("black shall mean white").

What is needed for a symbol to convey meaning is not an intelligent author, but a conventional understanding on the part of the readers or hearers that certain signs or certain

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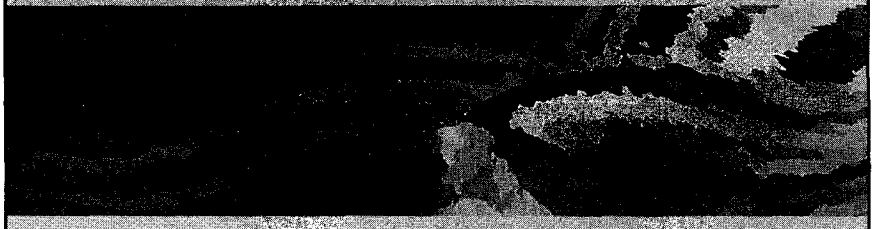

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sounds represent certain concepts. In the case of legal texts, we do not always know the authors, and when we do the authors are often numerous and may *intend* to attach various meanings to their composite handiwork. But we know when and where the words were promulgated, and thus we can ordinarily tell without the slightest difficulty what they meant to those who read or heard them.

Of course, even if I could persuade Steven Smith that words do have meaning apart from their author, he would still reject textualism—for the same reason that he rejects the positing of a hypothetical author who is "the normal speaker of English": Merely giving English words their normal meaning would not enable law to perform its "more ambitious functions," such as "establishing social policy."

But in a democracy, it is not the function of law to establish any more social policy than what is fairly expressed by legislation, enacted through prescribed democratic procedures. It troubles Smith, but does not at all trouble me—in fact, it pleases me—that giving the words of the Constitution their normal meaning would "expel from the domain of legal issues . . . most of the constitutional disputes that capture our attention," such as "Can a macho military educational institution dedicated to what is euphemistically called the 'adversative' method admit only men? Is there a right to abortion? Or to the assistance of a physician in ending one's life?" If we should read English as English, Smith bemoans, "these questions would seemingly all have received the same answer: 'No law on that one.'"

That is precisely the answer they should have received: The federal Constitution says nothing on these subjects, which are therefore left to be governed by state law. Smith's response is revealing: "We have not been content with this sort of modesty in our law." The antecedent of the pronoun is unspecified, but I fancy it refers to the legal academic community which establishes the permissible boundaries for Smith's thinking, or at least his writing. Many Americans outside that community *yearn* for this sort of modesty. Indeed, it was something of an issue in the last election. Smith's complaint is that the judges will not have the degree of power "we" would like them to have. Long live the common law!

If the notion that language means whatever its author intends it to mean is strange, stranger still is the

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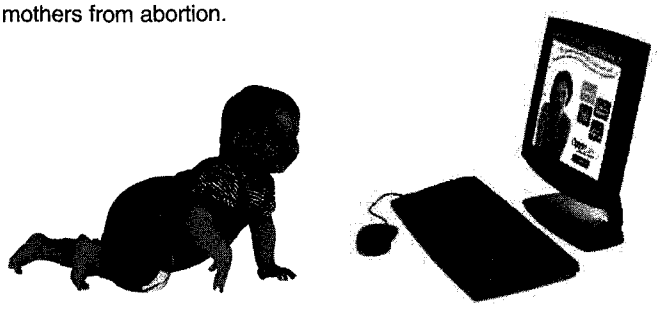

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notion that the author need not be a *real* author but can be a *hypothetical* one. This portion of Smith's discussion brings to mind the doctrine of "hypothetical jurisdiction" invented by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Where the question of the court's jurisdiction to decide the case was difficult, but the merits question presented by the case was quite simple (and produced a denial of relief just as a decision of no jurisdiction would), the court would simply *hypothesize* jurisdiction *and go on to decide the merits*.

The Supreme Court put an end to this doctrine with the statement (among others) that hypothetical jurisdiction can support nothing but a hypothetical judgment. So also, it seems to me, with law whose meaning depends upon a hypothetical author. The problem is not simply, as Smith thinks, that we cannot posit an *adequate* hypothetical author. It is that, even if we could, the law that would result would be a hypothetical law (whose violation would presumably be punishable by hypothetical incarceration).

If, as Smith contends, a hypothetical author is not up to the job of resolving law's quandary, neither, it turns out, is Smith himself. His book describes what he believes to be the quandary but does not resolve it, examining and rejecting various solutions—except, of course, the classical one, which is out of bounds because it violates the "norm prescribing that religious beliefs are inadmissible in academic explanations." The book's last paragraph acknowledges that "perplexity is not a resting place" but concludes that "we would perhaps be wise to confess our confusion and to acknowledge that there are richer realities and greater powers in the universe than our meager modern philosophies have dreamed of."

Hmmm. Richer *realities* and greater *powers* than our *modern* philosophies have dreamed of. Could there be a subversive subtext here? Why does Smith bring in at the outset of his book a third ontological category—religion—which he immediately disclaims, not because it is wrong, necessarily, but because it violates academic ground-rules? And why does his book repeatedly point out how the "classical school"—premised, alas, upon religion—*was* coherent where modern jurisprudence is not? And why does his penultimate chapter describe at length (though with the academically correct acknowledgment that it is "foreign to prevailing ontological

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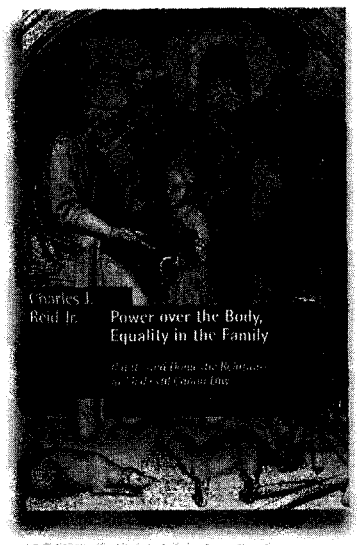

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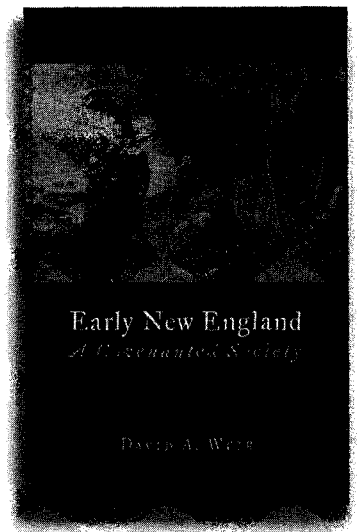

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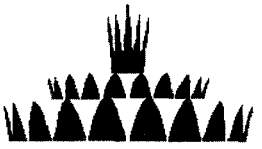

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assumptions") the work of Joseph Vining, which speaks of a hypothetical author who "would need in some sense to be actually *present*," and "to display qualities of caring, and of mindfulness"? Lawyers, Vining says, either "must believe what they do with legislation is often foolish and deceptive; or they do believe and confess a belief in *an informing spirit* in the legislated words that is *beyond individual legislators*." Holy cow! Could it be that . . . ?

STEVEN SMITH IS A diligent observer of academic correctness. This is evident in the fact that his book has at least as many *shes* as *hes* ("So the hiring partner said, 'I'll call you,' did she?")—excluding, of course, those pronouns referring to antecedent proper nouns that are masculine, for which Smith can hardly be blamed. One would never expect Smith to violate the "norm prescribing that religious beliefs are inadmissible in academic explanations." Vining (with appropriate disclaimer) is about as far as one can go without offending the proprieties. Could it be, however, that Smith is inviting, tempting, seducing his fellow academics to *consider* the theological way out of the quandary—the way that seemed to work for the classical school?

As one reaches the end of the book, after reading Vining's just-short-of-theological imaginings followed by Smith's acknowledgment of "richer realities and greater powers in the universe," he (she?) is sorely tempted to leap up and cry out, "Say it, man! Say it! Say the G-word! G-G-G-G-God!" Surely even academics can accept, as a hypothetical author, a *hypothetical* God! Textualists, being content with a "modest" judicial role, do not have to call in the Almighty to eliminate their philosophical confusion. But Smith may be right that a more ambitious judicial approach demands what might be called a *deus ex hypothesi*.

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The Great Woman Theory of History

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Reviewed by Charlotte Allen

Phyllis Schlafly never registered much with me. I knew her mostly as the woman who managed to stop the Equal Rights Amendment dead in its tracks in 1982. That was an amazing feat, taking place at a time when the amendment's feminist and liberal supporters seemed to be in control of every American institution except the White House, but I was living in California at the time, and the key battles of the ERA had taken place in geographically and culturally distant states: Florida, Illinois, North Carolina.

Schlafly herself, her hair swept up into an attractive but out-of-date chignon, had a prim Midwestern air that didn't resonate much on the West Coast. When she argued against federal sexual-harassment regulation in 1981 by declaring men seldom made passes at virtuous women, even I wondered whether her feminist-ideologue opponents weren't at least partly correct when they called her "obsolete." Besides, as time passed, Schlafly's victory over the ERA began to seem Pyrrhic, for all the evils that she and other opponents had said would ensue were the amendment ratified—no-holds-barred abortion, same-sex marriage, gender quotas, even co-ed bathrooms—ensued anyway, by other legislative, judicial, administrative, and extra-legal means.

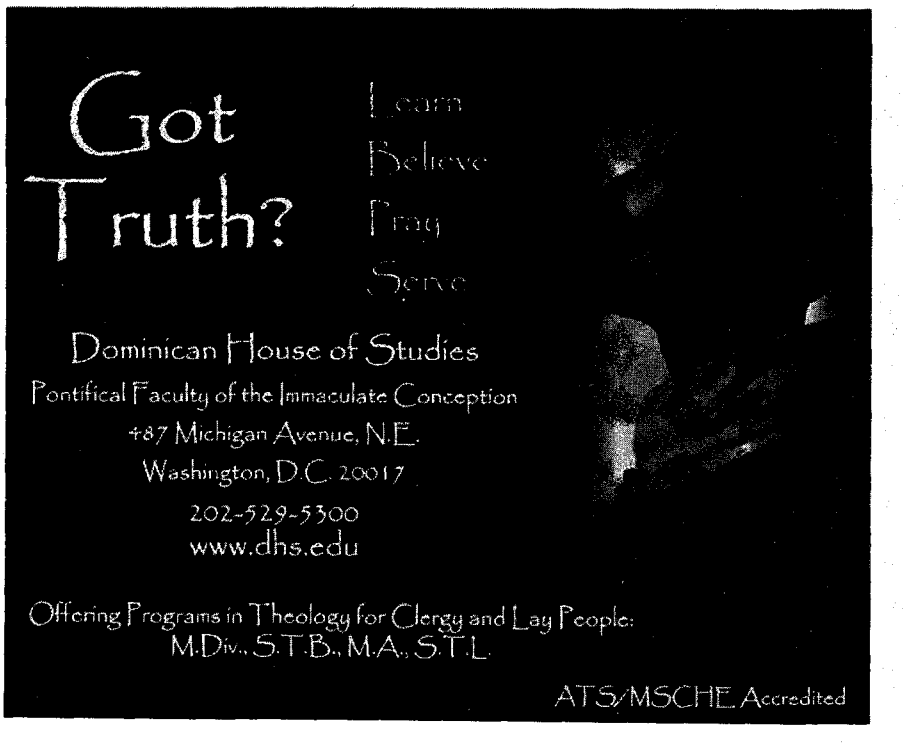
Charlotte Allen is author of The Human Christ: The Search for the Historical Jesus *and co-editor of the Independent Women's Forum's InkWell weblog.*

The last newspaper photograph that I saw of Phyllis Schlafly appeared in the *Washington Post* during the 1990s. Why, I wondered, is she wearing that frumpy flowered dress? Why is she making conservative women look like housewives from Peoria?

Donald T. Critchlow's impressively researched *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, a narrative of Schlafly's political career, explains that it was this unyielding quality of hers—her resolute refusal to cultivate the intellectual and cultural elites of either coast, even the conservative intellectual and cultural elites who were her natural ideological allies—that provided the astonishing power that she managed to wield in American politics for more than three decades.

The story of Phyllis Schlafly, as Critchlow, a professor of history at St. Louis University, tells it, is a story of conservatism operating far from centers of political and cultural power but crucial to the most important domestic political event of the second half of the twentieth century: the ascendancy and triumph of the once-moribund American right. In Critchlow's view, the quintessentially grassroots Schlafly was perhaps *the* pivotal figure in this process. Tough, smart, fearlessly outspoken, and possessed of an uncanny gift for strategically mobilizing her Middle American supporters (overwhelmingly women, those housewives from Peoria), she not only beat back the seemingly unstoppable ERA but played a key role in securing the presidential nominations of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Ronald Reagan in 1980, paving the way for today's Bush presidency and Republican dominance of Congress and statehouses across the country.

Critchlow's book is a powerful corrective to the belief of many conservatives (and liberals, too) that the phenomenal growth of the right was a top-down phenomenon, in which policy specialists wrote books and position papers whose ideas found their way to politicians and, ultimately, to voters. *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* illustrates the extent to which the conservative revolution percolated up from the bottom: "without grassroots activists to give political substance and energy



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to conservative ideas, conservatism as a political movement would have remained largely the province of a handful of writers. Schlafly's talent, in part, was her ability to translate conservative ideas to grassroots activists and motivate them to achieve political goals."

Phyllis Schlafly was born Phyllis Stewart to a solidly upper-middle-class and fervently Catholic family in St. Louis in 1924. When she was in the fourth grade, the Depression struck. Her father lost his job as a heavy-equipment salesman for Westinghouse and was never to work again. Phyllis's mother became the family's sole breadwinner, first as a department-store saleswoman and elementary school teacher, and later as librarian for the city's art museum. (She paid tuition for Phyllis and her younger sister at the local Academy of the Sacred Heart by cataloguing the convent school's books.) Despite their economic setbacks, the Stewarts remained staunch Republicans who despised Franklin D. Roosevelt's government-expanding welfare state and espoused an ethic of self-reliance, family, and moral integrity.

Phyllis Stewart graduated as class valedictorian and won a full scholarship to a Catholic women's college, but she decided that the place was not academically rigorous enough for her and transferred after her first year to Washington University. There, with no scholarship, she paid her way with a full-time job testing ammunition on the night shift at a St. Louis ordnance plant. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Washington in three years, won a fellowship to study politics at Radcliffe, and emerged a year later with a straight-A average, a master's degree, and glowing recommendations from her professors, who urged her to continue to a doctorate at Harvard.

Again, there was no money. She worked for a year in Washington with the predecessor to today's American Enterprise Institute. The experience—the only extended period of time she spent in Washington—exposed her to anti-liberalism as a philosophical proposition and made her a lifelong exponent of free enterprise and the preservation of American liberty. She also learned the art there of translating complex issues into simplified arguments that could be understood by average readers, an art that she put to use in the twenty polemical books she turned out over the decades, many of them bestsellers (the most famous, *A Choice, Not an Echo*, introducing Goldwater to her grassroots supporters in 1964, sold 3 million copies and is still in print).

Phyllis Stewart married Fred Schlafly, a likeminded Republican lawyer, in 1949. They moved across the Mississippi River to Alton, Illinois, in whose environs they lived until Fred Schlafly's death in 1994. The pair raised four boys and two girls, every one of whom subsequently enjoyed a successful career in academia, medicine, business, or law. Even as a housewife and young mother who breastfed all her children and taught them to read before they started school, Phyllis Schlafly immersed herself in political and civic organizations: the Radcliffe Club, the YWCA, the Community Chest, the Illinois Federation of Republican Women, the Daughters of the American Revolution. She ran for Congress in 1952 and lost to a popular Democratic incumbent (she lost another congressional race under similar circumstances in 1970), but by then she was already a popular public speaker and formidable debater whose passions were unyielding anticommunism and a strong nuclear defense in the Cold War.

Critchlow shrewdly notes what most feminist ideologues have failed to understand: There was nothing paradoxical or incongruous about

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Schlafly's pride in her homemaker status and her intense political preoccupations; she was carrying on a decades-old American tradition of women's involvement in public causes, from the antislavery and temperance movements to various kinds of social and moral reform. For Schlafly, it was perfectly natural, indeed proper, for wives and mothers to have political careers, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s she urged Republican women to think of themselves as more than the envelope-stuffers and luncheon adornments. By the time the feminist movement appeared in the late 1960s, Schlafly had already outflanked it.

By 1960, Schlafly was president of the Illinois Federation of Republican Women and a presence on the national Republican scene. At the convention in Chicago that year, she spearheaded a hugely attended pro-Goldwater rally that targeted the "Compact of Fifth Avenue," a platform agreement between the eventually nominated Richard Nixon and his establishment-Republican antagonist Nelson Rockefeller that Schlafly deemed a sellout on crucial elements of U.S. defense just when the Soviets seemed to be winning the arms race. Rockefeller's subsequent divorce of his wife and 1963 marriage to the much-younger Margaretta "Happy" Murphy, a mother of four who had recently divorced her husband, cemented in the minds of many family-minded Americans an unpleasant nexus between loose morals and weak support for the military; it marked the forging of a large wedge of voters that now consciously identified itself as conservative and would grow to include Democrats as well as Republicans. Schlafly continued to push Goldwater, self-publishing *A Choice, Not an Echo* and delivering tens of thousands of copies free to everyone with any interest in becoming or fielding a grassroots delegate to the 1964 convention.

The Goldwater debacle in that year's general election (a humiliating 52 electoral votes to Lyndon Johnson's 486) generated a panicked purge by the national Republican establishment of all Goldwater-identified conservatives, including Schlafly, who was pushed out of her expected presidency of the National Federation of Republican Women in a nasty election battle in 1967. The fortunes of conservatives sank even further after Nixon resigned in disgrace from the presidency in 1974. In the congressional race of that year, the Democrats ended up with 290 seats to the

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Republicans' 145. But that year also marked, paradoxically, the beginning of the swing back for ideological conservatives. Nixon in office, Critchlow writes, had been able to keep his party's right wing in check. When he left, the Republican right was "unleashed," poised to drive the party in its own direction (and that of the Reagan presidency) by capitalizing on widespread hostility toward the cultural changes of the 1970s that many believed had been foisted upon America by ideological liberals.

THE RISE OF ideological feminism, with its disdain for housewives and promotion of abortion, was exactly one of those cultural changes in Schlafly's eyes. Overnight in 1972, she shifted the focus of her interests from defense to social issues and founded the STOP ERA movement.

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The ERA at that moment seemed unstoppable, having been passed by overwhelming majorities of both houses of Congress and already approved by thirty of the thirty-eight states needed for ratification. The next ten years proved Schlafly's strategic genius and boundless energy. She had already learned how to forge a conservative alliance between traditionalist Catholic and evangelical Christian women, and she deftly enlarged the coalition to include Mormon and Orthodox Jewish women in a decade-long battle in which the stakes, as she defined them, were the home, the family, and traditional faith and culture. The promoters of the ERA had the media, celebrities, and national-level politicians on their side, but Schlafly and her grassroots allies knew how to work the state legislatures where the ratification skirmishes were fought. In the middle of all of this—a grueling nonstop regimen of speaking dates and meetings—Schlafly put herself through law school, graduating from Washington University in 1978 at age fifty-four.

The decade-long anti-ERA battle (whose success Critchlow links to the rise of a bipartisan discontent with both economic and cultural liberalism that led millions of Democrats to desert their party and vote for Reagan in 1980), is the climax of *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*. Critchlow gives the next twenty-three years of Schlafly's career rushed treatment. But, in truth, her political influence does seem to be in decline, although her Eagle Forum, founded in 1972, continues to operate. Schlafly is now eighty-one years old, and she has the undoubted satisfaction of knowing that the conservativism that she pushed without compromising for decades is now the majority (if slim majority) ideology in America. In this riveting, valuable book, Donald Critchlow makes the case for a Great Woman theory of history.

Augustinian Justice

CHRIST AND THE JUST SOCIETY IN THE THOUGHT OF AUGUSTINE
By ROBERT DODARO
Cambridge University Press, 262 pages, $75

Reviewed by Robert Louis Wilken

IN THE YEAR 412 Augustine received from the pagan pro-consul of Africa a series of questions about the Incarnation and other Christian teachings. The topics arose out of regular gatherings of a group of friends in Carthage, and in his letter Volusian flatters Augustine that he is the only one able to provide answers. Ignorance may be tolerated in other priests, he says, but "when it comes to Augustine the bishop, whatever he may happen not to know is a deficiency in the matter itself." In response Augustine reminds him of the words of the sage Jesus ben Sirach: "When a man has come to the end, he is just beginning."

Shortly afterward, Marcellinus, the imperial commissioner and friend of Volusian, wrote to Augustine with additional questions, some of which shifted the discussion from theology to Christianity's relation to the political order. "The preaching and teaching of Christ," writes Marcellinus, "is in no way compatible with the practices of the state, since, as many say, it is clear that it is his commandment that we should repay no one with evil for evil, that we should offer the other cheek to one who strikes us." Such teachings "are contrary to the practices of the state."

These were not theoretical questions to be debated calmly in the secluded comfort of one's country villa. The empire was being threatened by hostile invaders. The Goths had plundered their way down

ROBERT LOUIS WILKEN *is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia.*

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through Italy to sack Rome in 410, and the Vandals had crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to menace the olive groves and cities of Roman North Africa. Augustine took the challenge seriously, and he responded to Volusian and Marcellinus in several lengthy letters. In a substantive new book, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, Robert Dodaro, professor at the Institutum Patristicum in Rome, draws on these letters to frame the discussion of Augustine's understanding of a just society and of his great work the *City of God*. His approach offers an illuminating glimpse into Augustine's thinking.

Urbane and sophisticated, Volusian was a well-educated member of an old Roman family, thoroughly at home in Latin literature and proud of the inheritance he had received from his teachers. Augustine was formed in this same world, and he begins his response by appealing to the Roman understanding of civic virtue as presented by Cicero in his treatise *De Re Publica*, a work both he and Volusian knew well. This same work of Cicero's is cited by Augustine in book two of the *City of God* for its definition of a commonwealth, and again at a key point in the argument in book nineteen. What Augustine is after, Dodaro shows, is the term *iustitia* (justice), a key component in Cicero's definition of a true commonwealth.

But "justice" is also a central term in the Bible. In fact, the first paragraph of the *City of God* alludes to the famous passage from the prophet Habakkuk, "the just shall live by faith," and in book nineteen Augustine cites Habakkuk twice, most notably at a point where he links the just person (*iustus*) to the justice (*iustitia*) due God "who rules an obedient city according to his grace." As the just person lives by faith, says Augustine, so the association of just men and women lives by faith active in love, the love by which one loves God alone and one's neighbor as oneself.

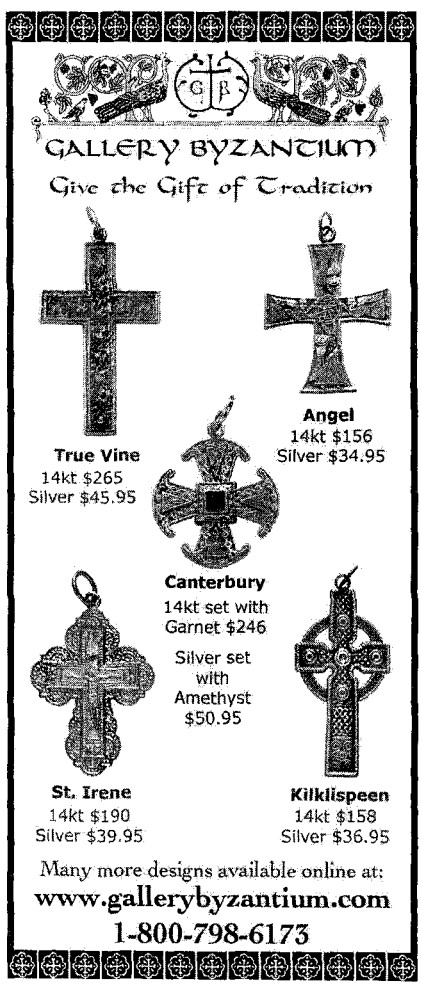
For Augustine justice begins and ends with religious devotion, the love and adoration of God. Where God does not receive his due there can be no justice and no right (*ius*). He begins with Cicero, but then Augustine shifts the discussion away from the political vocabulary familiar to Latin thinkers and fills the term justice with scriptural content. From start to finish Augustine's approach is theological: Justice has to do with knowing and loving God. "Piety," writes Dodaro, "is the pinnacle of all civic virtues."

But, because of sin, human beings are incapable of knowing and loving God without God's grace. Against the views of Roman statesmen and philosophers, Augustine argues that God is knowable only through the mystery of the Incarnation. Consequently there can be no justice without Christ.

In some of the most interesting pages in this book Dodaro draws direct links between the arguments in the *City of God* and Augustine's response to Pelagius. It is seldom noticed (at least in discussions of the *City of God)* that the Latin terms for justice and justification come from the same Latin root (lost in English when the biblical term "justice" is translated as "righteousness"). Without grace there can be no justification, but without grace there can also be no justice. Both justice and justification are possible only through union with the just man, Christ.

If Christ is the only one who lived without sin, the only truly just man (*iustus*) and mediator of justice, then he is the measure of virtue (justice being the first of the cardinal virtues). The question then becomes: How does the human soul comprehend the nature of virtue? Dodaro provides a wide-ranging and instructive account of the role of the scriptures (the Christian rhetoric that displaces the traditional Latin rhetoric) in forming the understanding and character of the statesman. The classical definition of justice was to "render to each his due," but according to Augustine, this must be understood in light of the biblical precept, "Let no one owe anything except to love one another."

As one illustration of how Augustine reasons Dodaro examines his response to Volusian's judgment that non-violence was the teaching of Scripture. Augustine believes that Volusian had arbitrarily chosen one strand of biblical teaching while ignoring others. If scripture is taken as a whole, he argues, it offers a deeper moral wisdom about the use of violence. His examples are suggestive. When struck, Christ does not "turn the other cheek." He asks the guard: "If I have said something wrong, then reproach me.... If I have spoken



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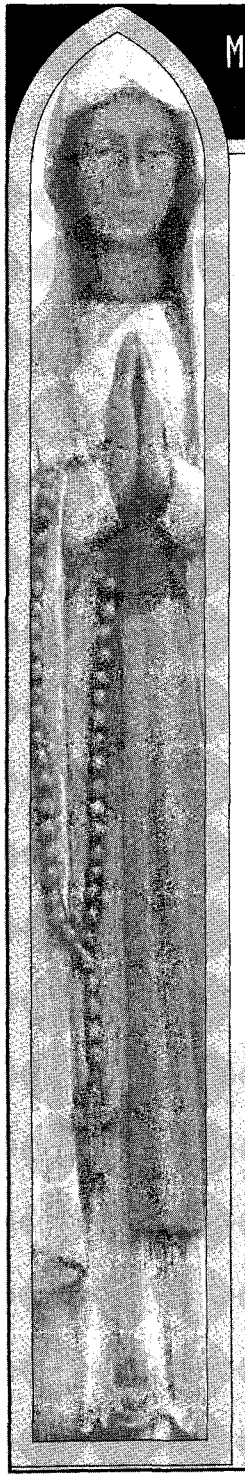
well, why do you strike me?" When Paul is struck by a guard at the order of Ananias, he mocks the chief priest and says, "God will strike you, whitewashed wall!" We must, says Augustine, "do many things against the will" of certain people, because they need to be "punished with a certain kind of harshness." What we cannot do, he says, is return evil for evil with a desire for vengeance.

By drawing extensively on his letters, Dodaro allows the reader to see how Augustine responded to concrete problems faced by magistrates and judges. Again and again Augustine shows that moral reasoning must be transformed by the deeper wisdom offered by Christ and the Scriptures. In another case involving rebels who had repented of their involvement in an uprising, Augustine urges clemency, not only for the sake of mercy but because of justice. Repentance was, it must be remembered, a long regime of public penitence. As biblical support he appeals to the woman caught in adultery in the Gospel of John and Nathan's tale to David in 2 Samuel.

Over the last several generations an earlier political reading of the *City of God* has given way to a more overtly theological interpretation. Dodaro takes this tradition of scholarship to a much deeper level in Augustine's thought. Augustine may have been addressing issues and ideas that are political, but he offers no theory of the state and few thoughts on the nature of political institutions. Though the *City of God* speaks of two cities, in truth Augustine shows little interest in the earthly city as such.

Even book nineteen of the *City of God*, read most often because of its presumed political implications, ends with a discussion of the justice due God. Quoting the psalm verse, "Happy the people whose God is the Lord," Augustine says, "It follows that a people alienated from that God must be wretched." In Augustine's thinking there is no place for a society that does not honor God.

In the introduction to *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine*, Dodaro remarks that Augustine followed Cicero in "focusing the concept of the just society on the role of its leaders in establishing justice." Throughout the book, the understanding and behavior of the statesman holds the center of attention. In Dodaro's reading of Augustine, the just society is the work of virtuous leaders—to which one must say, fair enough. And yet, the reader reaches the final pages of Dodaro's



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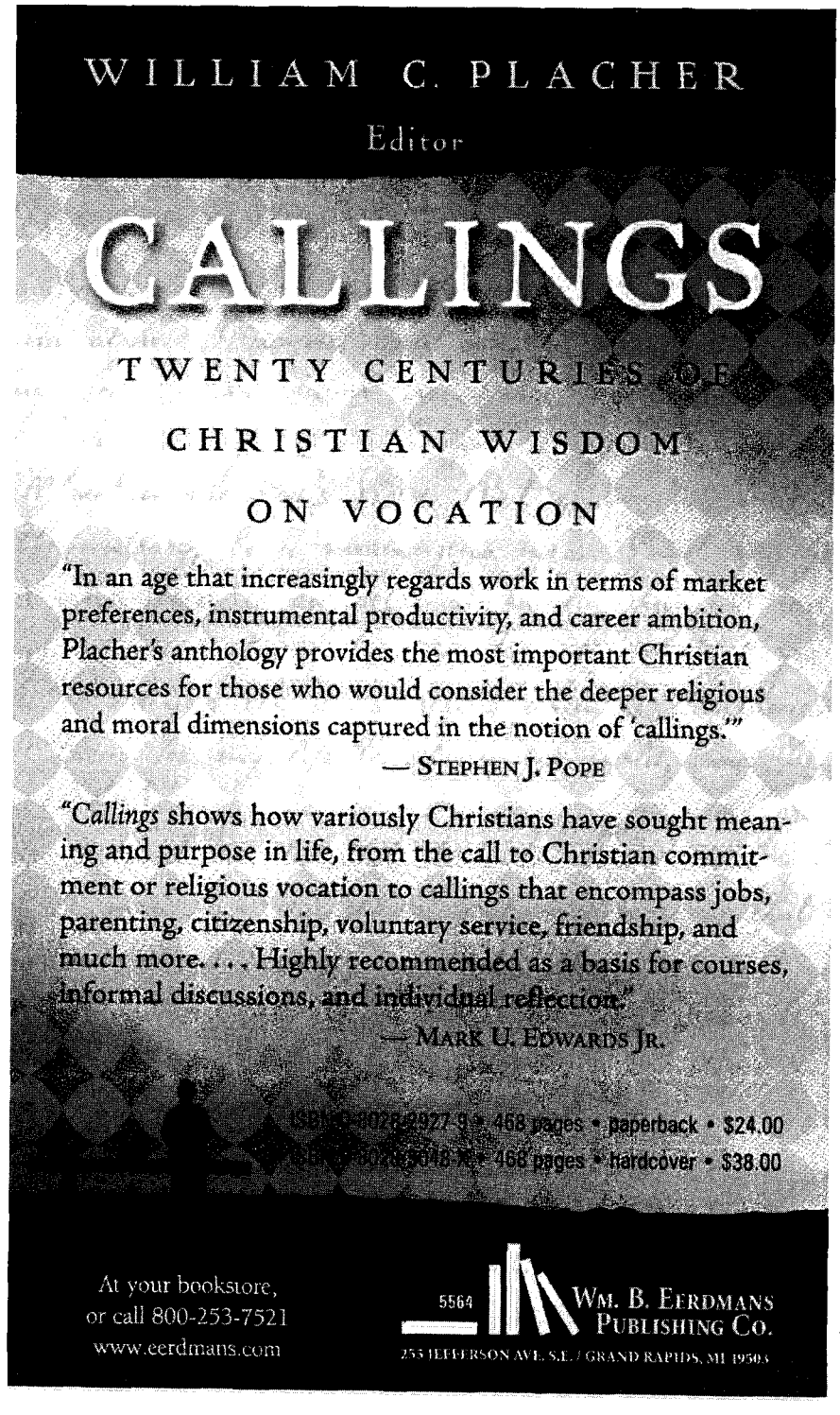
book wondering why Augustine had used the metaphor of a *city* to portray those united to Christ, why he speaks of the *association* of those who love God, and why he quotes a psalm verse that begins "Happy the *people*." Though the phrase "just society" appears in the title of Dodaro's book, there is scant attention to the corporate dimension of the city of God.

Without intending to, Dodaro has given us an individualistic reading of Augustine's thinking about the just society. But Christ's coming had issued in the forming of a new community, a social event, and Augustine insists that the City of God is a corporate body, an association of believers. The philosophers had taught that the life of the wise man should be social. We agree with this, says Augustine, and "how could that City have made its first start, how could it have advanced along its course, how could it attain its appointed goal, if the life of the saints were not social?" For Cicero there was only one society, *de re publica*, but Augustine belonged to an alternate society, and it is as another city, not just as individuals, that the people of God relate to the earthly city.

Dodaro seems reluctant to draw out the consequences of his argument. After his careful analysis of the roots of Augustine's thinking on the just society, he leaves it to the reader to speculate as to how his perspective relates to the larger questions posed by his theme. For example there is no discussion of the celebrated passage in book nineteen on the "compromise between human wills [of the two cities] about the things relevant to mortal life." Some have argued that here Augustine makes place for a neutral space in which men and women can come together to build a just society on the basis of "things relevant to this mortal life." Dodaro's thinking runs in a quite different direction, but the reader gets little guidance on how to negotiate this *crux interpretum*.

In sum, *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* is a first-class study of Augustine that broadens and deepens our understanding of his thought. The use of Augustine's correspondence with magistrates and public officials to present his thinking is fresh and engaging. And Dodaro is surely correct in his depiction of the reasoning that informs Augustine's judgments on particular social and political problems. Yet one wishes the book had another chapter (or a reflective conclusion) that addresses the inevitable questions raised by any discussion of the just society.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The Ugly American Goes to Sudan

ACTS OF FAITH
By PHILIP CAPUTO
Knopf, 688 pages, $26.95

Reviewed by Cynthia Grenier

PHILIP CAPUTO'S *Acts of Faith* is a big, serious, ambitious work. It has been admirably researched and is quite decently written, to boot. So why does it fall short of provoking any real enthusiasm? Quite possibly because—on reaching the end of this intricately plotted novel—you realize that it is no coincidence two of the key players are American. Their nationality is essential for the author to make a very specific, and very tired, political point.

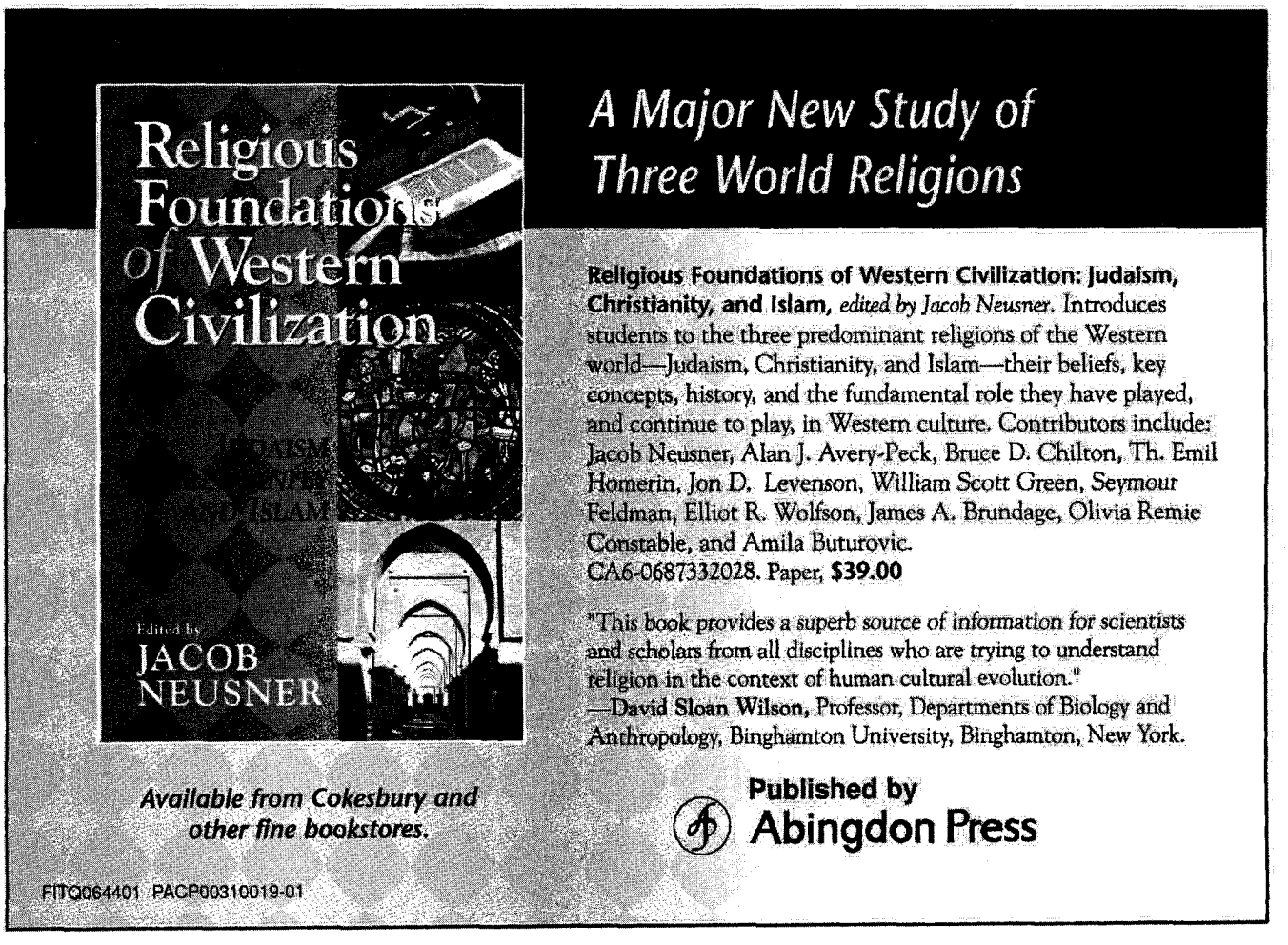
This realization becomes utterly clear in the last quarter of the novel, where the action really picks up. Caputo settled on the nationality of his characters, the aviator and entrepreneur Douglas Braithwaite and the evangelical Christian Quinette Hardin, because he thinks they represent damning flaws in the American national character today.

Initially, such American flaws appear almost as positive virtues: energy, determination, a desire to do good. Only gradually—in fact, so gradually as to slow the impact of the novel—do these failings stand revealed as an explanation in Caputo's mind as to why the United States plays such a damaging role on the world stage.

Now that I think about it, Caputo clues the reader in at the onset with his three epigraphs. The first, from Ecclesiastes, declares, "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity, . . . for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." The second is from Joseph Conrad's novel *Nostromo*: "It seemed to him that every conviction, as soon as it became effective, turned into that form of dementia the gods send upon those they wish to destroy." And the third, from Blaise Pascal: "Whoever tries to turn angel turns beast." (Not perhaps the most felicitous translation of that well-known seventeenth-century dictum.)

Caputo locates his story in Africa—an Africa he defines in his very first sentence: "there is no differ-

CYNTHIA GRENIER *is a writer living in Washington, D.C.*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ence between God and the Devil in Africa. Whoever understands that in his blood and bones and guts, where true understanding resides, will swim in its treacherous currents, whoever doesn't will drown." The action is situated principally in Kenya and the Sudan, a territory Caputo got to know thirty years ago having crossed the deserts of Sudan and Eritrea on foot and camelback on the trip that inspired his first novel, *Horn of Africa*. This most recent work however is centered around the civil war raging in Sudan where Muslim warriors swoop down on villages of people, either Christian or followers of ancient rites, to murder and capture slaves. Famine, drought, and abject misery are rampant. To his credit Caputo makes this alien world come very much alive.

The plot involves a Christian aid organization that pays dollars to liberate the black slaves taken in these raids by the northern Sudanese Arabs led by a warlord named Ibraham Idris, who is acting in concert with the government in Khartoum. Ironically the American dollars only incite the *murahaleen* to increase their raids, while an Arab middleman works a scheme to increase the number of dollars he can negotiate. Neither the men of God nor the soldiers of Allah come off too well.

Braithwaite, with his own small aviation company, flies food and medicaments into rebel-controlled areas of southern Sudan declared "no-go zones" by the authorities of Khartoum (meaning off-limits to the UN and any help from that organization). It isn't too long before Braithwaite, recognizing economic advantages for himself, starts flying in arms for the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, disguising the shipments of grenade launchers as food and medical necessities.

In little time, a devout young Christian, Quinette Hardin, straight from the cornfields of Iowa, becomes convinced Jesus is directing her to stay in the war zone and dedicate herself not only to helping these suffering people materially but to saving their souls as well. Convinced of her holy calling, she gives herself to Africa body and soul. Actually her body she gives to the six foot seven inch Nubian lieutenant colonel of the SPLA, Michael Archangelo Goraende, going to the extent of having her own body incised and scarred according to Nubian traditional ceremonies.

Quinette is perhaps the most interesting character. We see her develop

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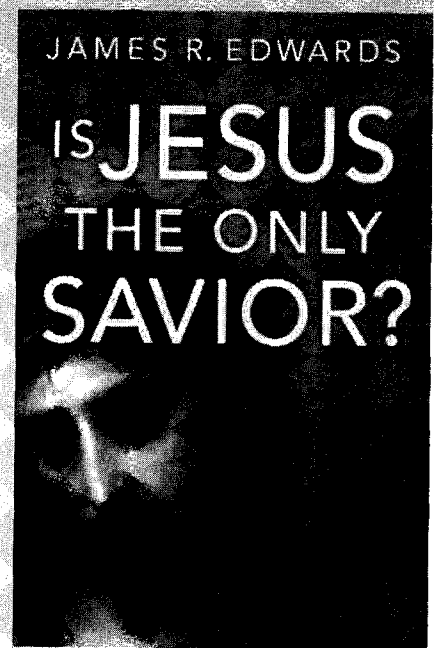

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from a fairly uncomplicated innocent do-gooder into a woman who discovers unexpected strength in herself. By marrying her lieutenant colonel and electing to live out her life in Africa, she recognizes the destiny she has chosen and what it ultimately means. Quinette is a bit of a fool perhaps, but a brave if misguided woman. Braithwaite, meanwhile, as an updated ugly American, is not a particularly interesting creation, although his presence is essential to the plot.

To Caputo's credit, it must be said that in the last quarter of the novel the various elements of the plot—moral and political—all slide and lock together quite perfectly. It's only a pity he had to take so long to get there. Substantially shortened, *Acts of Faith* could have been an impressive piece of work. To make this world come even more alive, readers might consider seeking out the quite splendid book of photographs of Nubians taken by the infamous Leni Riefenstahl a few years ago to see that Caputo is no way exaggerating in his many descriptions of these people as being so startlingly beautiful.

Seeking Signs and Wonders

THE MIRACLE DETECTIVE
By RANDALL SULLIVAN
Atlantic Monthly, 448 pages, $25

Reviewed by Philip Zaleski

FEW THINGS RANKLE the modern mind more than religious apparitions. See a ghost, and you may raise a few eyebrows; see a celestial being, and eyes will roll, tongues clack, friends worry and strangers edge away. To believe in the Blessed Virgin Mary's sanctity is, in our day, standard Christian issue; to believe in her heavenly queenship is acceptable, if rather old-school; but to believe that she has visited France, Rwanda, or Bosnia-Herzegovina with a message of love and apocalyptic thunder is, in large swaths of the educated world, to cross the line of good taste into the twilight zone of pious fanaticism.

Randall Sullivan, an investigative reporter for *Rolling Stone* and the author of two true-crime books (*The Price of Experience*, about the "Billionaire Boys Club" of corrupt financiers, and *Labyrinth*, about the murder of rappers Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G.) encountered all these reactions when he decided to investigate the world of Catholic apparitions.

He encountered them, most interestingly, in himself, for he began his research as a committed skeptic. One day, while browsing in a Portland bookstore, he picked up a volume about the apparitions at Medjugorje, in what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina, classified it as "your basic devotionalist drivel," and told himself that "religion was a subject best left to the religious." Nonetheless, the topic stuck in his mind. A few weeks later he pitched to his publisher, on the spur of the moment, a "wide-ranging" book on religious visions and soon walked through the looking-glass into a madcap realm of bleeding statues, mysterious parchments, apocalyptic prophecies, luminous apparitions, and the host of scholars, madmen, holy fools, and ordinary faithful who pursue these arcane subjects.

The upshot of his investigations, detailed in this very long and lively book, was that he wound up a believer (with reservations). To begin as a skeptic and end as a believer is a familiar authorial pose, one might even say a genre in its own right, and more than one author has adopted a false naiveté to lend his book a powerful denouement and to juice up sales. But Sullivan's odyssey from doubt to faith rings true, if only because of the urgency of his reporting, much of it intensely personal, as he describes not only the world of Catholic apparitions but his increasing inability to resist the startling messages that they convey.

PHILIP ZALESKI *is a research associate in religion at Smith College. His latest book, co-authored with his wife Carol Zaleski, is* Prayer: A History *(Houghton Mifflin).*

UNIVERSITY FACULTY FOR LIFE
Invitation to Attend and Call for Papers
Sixteenth Annual Meeting, June 2-4, 2006
Villanova University

University Faculty for Life is a non-denominational, multi-disciplinary organization which welcomes the membership and participation of all pro-life faculty members in institutions of higher education. In 2006 its annual conference will be held at Villanova University near Philadelphia, PA. Attendance is open to current or emeritus members of college, university, or seminary faculty and their spouses, or to others by individual request.

The keynote speaker at the conference will be Robert P. George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director, James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University.

Proposals for presentations are invited. The deadline for paper proposals, including the title and a one page outline, is April 3, 2006. All papers can be submitted for possible publication in Life and Learning, an annual peer-reviewed selection of conference papers.

The conference will begin early on the afternoon of Friday, June 2. Registration for the conference, including a wine and cheese reception, refreshments between sessions and the concluding banquet, is $60.00. Accommodation is available at the Villanova student apartments.

To propose a paper, contact:
Professor Jeanne Heffernan
Department of Humanities
Villanova University
800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085
or email: jeanne.heffernan@villanova.edu

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For the most part, Sullivan's multi-year investigation focuses upon Medjugorje, site of the most spectacular Marian visions of modern times. Here, on June 24, 1981, the Virgin appeared for the first time to six young people—four girls, two boys, ranging in age from ten to seventeen—and delivered a message filled with uncontroversial Catholic verities: "I have come to tell you that God exists" and "Obey your grandmother and help her, because she is old" typify Mary's pronouncements on this occasion. The messages continued the next day, and the next, and—here is where Medjugorje stands apart from all other apparitions—continue to this day. As of 2005, three of the visionaries (now fully grown adults) still receive daily visits from Mary, with many thousands of messages now received.

The unfolding of the Medjugorje events makes for an immensely complex tale. Throngs of people began to attend the daily appearances (the total number of visitors, by 2005, has reached many millions), the Communist authorities accused the visionaries of deceit and mental illness, and the local bishop rejected the visions outright, detecting in the hubbub the hand of Satan. Important Catholic scholars, most notably French theologian Father René Laurentin, visited the site and came away convinced that the seers were indeed discoursing with Mary. Miraculous healings occurred, in which the dumb spoke and the paralyzed walked. Teams of scientists jabbed the seers with needles and flooded their dilated pupils with light, all to no effect; the children remained impervious, rapt in meditation, and the specialists concluded that "no scientific discipline seems able to describe these phenomena."

Meanwhile, the divine messages poured out on a daily basis; most sustained the original mild—some would say bland—note, but others had more bite, especially ten "secrets" that, in a curious echo of the three Fatima secrets, include chastisements and apocalyptic warnings. Only one secret has been revealed: When the apparitions end, the Virgin will leave a permanent supernatural sign, so far undefined, at the site of the original visitation. In addition to these perplexing messages, the visionaries have also been granted the power of supernatural travel, and some of them have visited Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. Heaven is a blend of near-death and Swedenborgian landscapes, described by one of the visionaries as "a huge endless tunnel filled with an unearthly kind of light" and populated by men and women in bright yellow and gray robes. Another seer received, in addition, a mysterious parchment, never seen by the public, made of some unearthly substance and containing the full text of all ten secrets.

SULLIVAN RECOUNTS THIS history with tremendous verve, interweaving the religious, social, and political threads, which include the Bosnia war from 1992 to 1995, as well as numerous visits to the Vatican, where the author discovers that Curia officials, as one would expect, hold a variety of opinions about Medjugorje, covering the spectrum from enthusiasm to scorn.

The Miracle Detective also describes in detail other twentieth-century apparitions of varying impressiveness, ranging from an image of the Virgin appearing in a corner of a landscape painting in a rundown trailer home in Boardman, Oregon, to the amazing events in Zeitun, Egypt, from 1968 to 1973, where millions of people witnessed the glowing figure of the Virgin atop a Coptic church (the image was photographed by several professional photographers and can readily be found online).

What holds Sullivan's report together, apart from his impressive authorial skills—he shows particular ability to capture the eccentric personalities involved, as well as the hot,

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Commonweal, a journal of opinion edited by lay Catholics, is pleased to announce the **2006 Commonweal Theological Essay Prize.** The prize, made possible by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, features **a $5,000 first-place award and a $2,500 second-place award.** Both winning essays will be published in *Commonweal*.

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dry, impoverished landscape of Medjugorje—is his personal investment in the case. He begins by assuming that there are only three viable explanations for the visionaries' claims: fraud, hysteria, or real visitations. Vatican officials added two more to the list: diabolical possession and the sophisticated idea that a genuine divine encounter may be filtered by a seer's unconscious, producing a vision "at once symbolic and actual."

Choosing among these options drives Sullivan half-mad. He seems to believe that he glimpsed a demon in the Piazza Navona in Rome; he panics and tries to leave Medjugorje; while witnessing an exorcism at Medjugorje's Youth Festival Mass, he reveals, "I felt as if the bones of my sternum had separated and my heart was about to break through the flesh." This extreme passage gives some sense of the crackling electric sweep of thoughts and feelings that course through the book.

Happily, Sullivan accompanies this high psycho-drama with a sense of his own absurdity and some delightful responses to less than adequate theories put forth by so-called experts; grappling with the problem of the devil, he turns to the writings of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, and finds that "Jung's answer was exactly the sort of obfuscatory twaddle that had made him such a disappointment to me: Evil is terribly real for each individual. If you regard the principle of evil as a reality, you can just as well call it the devil." Exit Jung.

The mystery of Medjugorje remains unresolved at book's end. Sullivan doesn't know what to make of it, and neither does the redoubtable Fr. Benedict Groeschel, an expert whom Sullivan visits as his investigation peters out. "I find Medjugorje extremely puzzling," Groeschel admits, suggesting that perhaps the apparitions began as authentic supernatural events but "changed into something else," possibly a variety of "deeply devout hysteria."

This cautionary note is characteristic of Groeschel, whose *A Still Small Voice* (1993) remains the best modern study of private revelations, including apparitions. Groeschel, who is sympathetic to these phenomena and to those who experience them, emphasizes throughout his book that visions never come directly from God but always through human intermediaries and thus contain personal elements, cannot be taken as infallible, and must be assessed prudently in light of the teachings of the Church.

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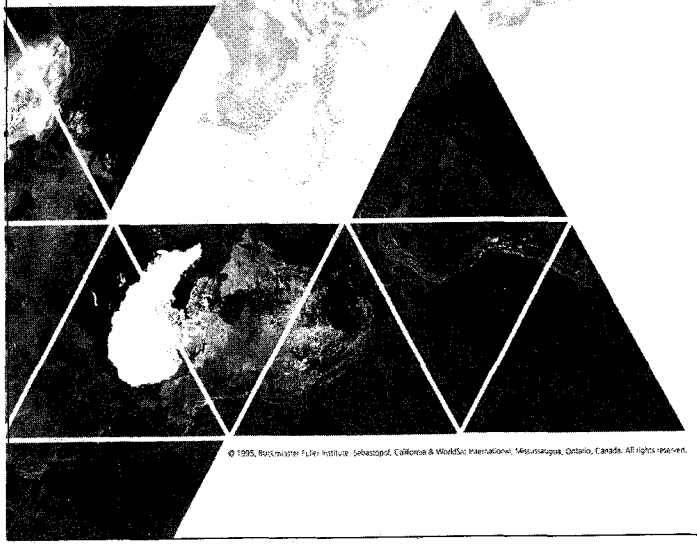

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Sullivan, far less of a theologian, is more inclined to shout the legitimacy of the Medjugorje apparitions from the rooftops. But even he holds back, worried by the oddities that surround the case. All the same, his long investigation pays the highest dividend: He winds up his study as a Christian, having seen too much—not only in the way of miraculous events, but in the deep dogged faith of Catholics around the world—to doubt the reality and the mystery of God. "All I had demonstrated to myself," Sullivan concludes, "was that I could not live without God's love, and that the only way I knew to get it was to love Him back." The seers of Medjugorje, deluded or not, could not ask for a happier resolution.

Briefly Noted

Heavenly Torah as Refracted Through the Generations.
By Abraham Joshua Heschel, edited and translated by Gordon Tucker with Leonard Levin.
Continuum, 848 pages, $95

One of the most delightful effects of Vatican II, with its decidedly positive appreciation of Judaism, has been the publication of significant books of Jewish theology, both classical and modern, by Christian publishers. Recent evidence of that is Continuum's publication of an English translation of what many knowledgeable Jews consider the greatest work of the greatest Jewish theologian of the twentieth century. Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) wrote a massive work in Hebrew on the idea of revelation in classical rabbinic theology. Two volumes were published during his lifetime. A third volume, put together from an unfinished manuscript, was published posthumously. This excellent translation of all three Hebrew volumes, plus helpful notes and introductions by the translators, is a great boon to anyone interested in classical Jewish theology and Heschel's rethinking of it. This work demonstrates the opposite of Bernard Lonergan's *bon mot* about "ideas passed from book to book without any evidence of having gone through a mind." The theology of the Rabbis of the Talmud (whose role in Judaism is at least as important as the role of the Church Fathers in Christianity) comes alive in this work precisely because it went through Heschel's great mind. The book is thus a profound encounter of a great Jewish mind with what Jaroslav Pelikan (a close friend of Heschel's) once called "the living faith of the dead" (as distinct from "the dead faith of [some] of the living," an apt designation of too much contemporary theology). Heschel invites living readers to join with him as he himself joined with the ancient rabbis in seeking the Living God of Israel, the Giver of the Torah to Israel and the world. The most basic doctrine of Judaism is the revelation of the Torah to Israel at Mount Sinai. That includes not only Scripture but, along with it, the ongoing Jewish tradition. Tracing the great theological debates in premodern Judaism about the extent of the human contribution to that revelation to the debates between two of the greatest rabbinic theologians of the second century A.D., Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael, Heschel shows how modern Jewish theology is and will be sterile until it enters again into this ancient and perennial debate. Christian readers should compare this work to that of the greatest Christian theologian of the twentieth century, Karl Barth (with whom Heschel has some important commonalities), who began his *Church Dogmatics* not with "the Doctrine of God," but with "the Doctrine of the Word of God." Talk of God presupposes God's talk to man in revelation for both theologians. As one who was privileged to be Professor Heschel's student when he was writing this great work, I rejoice it is now available to a wider audience. I can well imagine a year-long course on Judaism using this book alone. It is not only about Judaism; it is truly from it. It is surely a primary, not a secondary text, both for Jews and for gentiles, especially for Christians who too worship the Lord God of Israel and study His Torah.

—David Novak

Protestantism and the American Founding.
Edited by Thomas Engeman and Michael Zuckert.
University of Notre Dame Press, 296 pages, $25 paper

This collection of essays examines the controversial "amalgam" thesis of the American founding offered by political theorist Michael Zuckert. The thesis arises as part of the long-running debate about the relative weight of liberal and republican ideas in early American history. Was it the liberal concern for natural rights and limited government, or the republican concern for active citizenship and public virtue that was more important to the founders? Zuckert's solution is that the founding is an amalgam of Lockeanism and Protestant politics, in which the Puritan use of Scripture as the basis of politics gave way to the basis of natural rights as defined by Locke. Zuckert uses Luther's doctrine of Two Kingdoms as a picture for explaining how he sees Locke and Protestantism as amalgamated. Whereas traditional Protestants hold the Bible as authoritative for both kingdoms, Locke made reason dominant in the worldly kingdom and relegated the Bible to the Kingdom of God. Luther argued that "Turn the other cheek" told the individual Christian how to live in the one king-

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dom, and "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities" told everyone how to live in the other. Locke's argument is that it is not Romans 13 that tells us how to live together in political society, but reason, by which we derive natural rights and a limited government. The volume's best responses are by Mark Noll and Peter Augustine Lawler, with Thomas West raising some important points as well. Though all broadly sympathetic to Zuckert, they are at their best when they question Zuckert's claim that the founders perceived a strong distinction between politics based on reason and politics based on revelation. Lawler agrees that Locke and Jefferson often wrote this way, but he would prefer to call attention to other, dissenting founding voices. West also questions the reason-revelation dichotomy but does so by the opposite path: denying that even Locke made such a strong distinction: "No Zuckertian 'convergence between Locke and Protestantism' was necessary, because Locke was already a Protestant theologian." In West's reading, Zuckert concludes that Locke cannot be a Protestant theologian because his privileging of reason contradicts the Reformation doctrine of sola scriptura, which Zuckert mistakenly defines as a demand for revelation over reason. But if *sola scriptura* is, rather, a practice that guides the ordering of knowledge and tradition under the discipline of Scripture, Locke could well be a Protestant theologian, though a skillfully subversive one. In fact, seeing Locke's theological influence better accounts for Zuckert's own historical evidence. In the closing lines of the book Zuckert writes that the way Protestants turned to Locke is similar to the way Christians now "take their astronomy from modern science rather than the Bible." But if that were right, we would have expected founding-era Christians to stop appealing to Romans 13 in political debates, which they did not do. Instead they reinterpreted it. Having read their Locke, Americans re-read their Paul. We can only make sense of this fact by realizing that it was precisely Locke's Protestantism, unorthodox though it be, that so captured the minds of American Protestants.

—John Perry

Rallying the Really Human Things.
By Vigen Guroian.
ISI, 225 pages, $25

A reminder that fairytales are not for childhood alone. Loyola College's Vigen Guroian teaches a course on religion in children's literature, and over the years he has observed a general lack of moral imagination in his students. Such an incapacity, he notes, characterizes modern society, contributing to a loss of Christian humanity. And so Guroian has collected seventeen of his diverse essays on Christian humanism and the moral imagination. The book's looseness is forgivable given its range: Eugenics, vocations, and the sexualization of America's campuses all receive chapters, along with tributes to G.K. Chesterton, Edmund Burke, Flannery O'Connor, and T.S. Eliot. Especially interesting is Guroian's proposal (informed by his Orthodox theology) to separate the institution of Christian marriage from civil unions. He goes too far, though, when he concludes that natural rights, and the narrative of universal human freedom, are historically false and, at bottom, secular. Still, in all, a pleasant, accessible primer on the importance of the really human things.

—John Rose

On Marriage and Family.
Edited by Matthew Levering.
Rowman & Littlefield, 125 pages, $19.95

A splendid little set of readings on marriage, family, and human sexuality by, inter alia, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Birgitta of Sweden, Thomas More, Teresa of Avila, and Teresa of Calcutta. It has been suggested that the "theology of the body" advanced by John Paul the Great is an effort to counter the tradition's negativism about sexuality. This small book demonstrates that what its editor calls a "radically beautiful" invitation to self-giving has been there from the beginning.

Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce.
By Elizabeth Marquardt.
Crown, 288 pages, $24.95

There are still couples who say they are "doing it for the children," but it seems their number is declining. The idea that divorce is better for children than living with parents in a troubled marriage is increasingly being challenged by sociological and psychological studies, and by personal stories such as those told by the author. Foreword by the noted authority on marriage and family, Judith Wallerstein.

In the Vineyard of the Lord: The Life, Faith, and Teachings of Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI.
By Marco Bardazzi.
Rizzoli, 128 pages, $16.95 paper

A lovely little book that brings together overviews of Benedict's life and thought. About a third of the book is called "In His Own Words," and offers extended quotations on everything from ecclesiology, ecumenism, and liturgical reform to war and peace. For the person who knows little about the new pope and is seeking a basic introduction, this is the book to recommend. The title, of course, is from his first words as pope, in which he described himself as a servant in the vineyard of the Lord.

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The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Truth and Tolerance, Again

The notion that in matters of religion, but not only in matters of religion, one must make a choice between tolerance and truth is as persistent as it is false. It comes up again in connection with a study designed by sociologists James D. Davidson and Dean R. Hoge that explores how the sexual scandals have influenced Catholic attitudes toward the faith and the Church. The study included a nationwide survey of more than a thousand self-identified Catholics, 60 percent of whom are registered in a parish and therefore, presumably, more active than the 40 percent who are not or are not sure whether they are registered.

"The overall picture," the researchers report, "is one of stability, not decline, although there is more decline in some places, such as Boston. To our surprise, generational differences on the effects of the scandal turn out to be small, as were differences between registered parishioners and others." "Catholics like being Catholic and are not very likely to leave the Church for other religious groups. Eighty-one percent of Catholics said that 'being Catholic is a very important part of who I am,' and two-thirds said they 'cannot imagine being anything other than Catholic.' Eighty-two percent said the 'Catholic Church is very important to me personally,' and 71 percent said they 'would never leave the Catholic Church.'"

Contrary to a mischievous report of some years ago that only one-third of Catholics believe in the Real Presence in the Eucharist, the study finds that 83 percent of Catholics agree that in the Mass "the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ." Belief in the Real Presence is possibly considerably larger than 83 percent, since some Catholics, while not doubting the reality, would phrase differently what they believe happens in the Mass. Also of interest, while fewer than 50 percent of Catholics can name their bishop and a substantial minority thinks lay people should have a greater say in how their parishes are run, there is little support for the kind of angry challenging of the Church's structure promoted by groups such as Voice of the Faithful and Call to Action. Not surprisingly, on every score of adherence, belief, and practice, registered parishioners score higher than the nonregistered.

Then we come to the question of truth and tolerance. Davidson and Hoge suggest there is a tension, if not contradiction, between the fact that the great majority of Catholics declare themselves strongly devoted to the Church and, at the same time, sound very "relativistic" in saying that other churches and world religions "are equally good ways of finding ultimate truth." "In short," say the researchers, Catholics "are trying hard to be both Catholic and ecumenical in a highly pluralistic world." But maybe it is not a question of trying to, as Davidson and Hoge put it, "balance being Catholic and being ecumenical." Maybe they are ecumenical *because* they are Catholic.

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In a response to the study, John Cavadini, chairman of theology at the University of Notre Dame, explored a while back exactly this possibility with specific reference to Catholic young people and their view of John Paul II: "What they see in him is perhaps something that youth of any age and period admire: idealism and commitment, tempered with warmth. John Paul has the ability to state ideals forthrightly without closing off openness toward the 'other,' regardless of the other's religion or lack thereof. Like our millennial youth, John Paul seems to respect, as something sacred, religious faith and moral commitment wherever he finds it. He sees it as a basis for the building of what he calls the 'civilization of love.' Without wanting to minimize the problems or real inconsistencies in the position of our younger brothers and sisters in Christ, are they not, in some sense, especially the children of this pope in this regard? In their abiding affection for Catholicism, coupled with an openness toward other faiths, could we not see an intuition, not of relativism, but of a religious alternative to the indifferentism of secular culture? In place of the secular ideals of 'tolerance' or 'respect for difference' simply as difference, is there among young Catholics a sense of love or charity founded on and in the Christian faith itself? On the one hand, charity makes no sense apart from the truth of the Catholic faith that proclaims the love revealed in the Incarnation as the absolute and final revelation. And yet it is that very charity that 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things' (1 Cor 13:7) and so, in its very absoluteness, intrinsically implies an openness as well. This means that the evangelization of our youth should be aimed, not at undoing the 'inconsistency' that Davidson and Hoge point to, but at making articulate the inarticulate commitments that are implicitly folded in the 'joy and hope' this very striking juxtaposition seems to embody."

There is a very big difference between tolerating others because nobody has the truth and being convinced of the truth that we are to love those with whom we disagree about the truth.

FT

THE POSTHUMAN FUTURE

The term "posthuman" is gaining a certain cachet. There is, for instance, Francis Fukuyama's recent book, *Our Posthuman Future*, and now Joel Garreau's *Radical Evolution* gives further currency to the term. Garreau quotes a "professor of innovation" who says, "My son today wakes up in the morning certain of one thing. And that's that the world will be different by nightfall. He expects it. Humans didn't use to live that way." Really? From time immemorial, I expect boys have been jumping out of bed expecting the world to be different by nightfall, maybe by virtue of what they'll do that day. There have always been people, some of them passing as deep thinkers, who have suffered from the excessive excitability that makes it intolerable to believe their moment in history is not unprecedented.

They are called "neophiliacs," people infatuated by the new or by what they imagine to be new. Was it only a few years ago that "futurists" were a big item on the bestseller lists? Asked their profession, they answered "futurist," and got away with it. Futurists we will always have with us. Please do not misunderstand: Of course we should be thinking about the future, and of course new things happen. Pharmacological mood enhancers, pills to slow aging or increase SAT scores by two hundred points, plus cloning and creating human-animal life forms—these are among the things we should be thinking hard about.

The inventor Ray Kurzweil is a big name in this near-fantasy world of speculation. The author of *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*, he writes: "We will be part of this very rapid explosion of intelligence, and beauty, and a very rapid acceleration of this evolutionary process. And that, to me, is what God is." There you have "process theology" of a low order. Predictably, the government is getting in on the game. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is working on techniques that will enable men to fight for weeks, both night and day, without eating or sleeping. There is a federal document called "Converging Technologies for Improving Human Performance" which concludes: "The twenty-first century could end in world peace, universal prosperity, and evolution to a higher level of compassion and accomplishment."

Not everybody is so sanguine. Bill Joy, also a name to reckon with in these discussions, is anything but joyful. "I think it is no exaggeration to say," says he, "that we are on the cusp of the further perfection of extreme evil." One false step and we're finished. The engineering of evolution will produce warring human species, and "nanobots" that will take over from human beings entirely. One slip in a laboratory and "gray goo" could annihilate us all. Against Mr. Joy, Peter Pettus suggests a dose of positive thinking. Concluding his review of the Garreau book he writes, "I think Mr. Garreau is right, and I see a parallel here with democracy itself. The aggregate of voters often reaches levels of electoral wisdom hard to predict. So here,

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despite the undeniable threats looming, humans on earth with their increasing interconnectivity and commonality might just deal with this evolutionary crisis in surprisingly creative ways. It's that or the gray goo." We might just muddle through to a human future after all, at least for a while.

Most of the futuristic literature, both the more sober and fantastical, is on a continuum with the tainted history of eugenics. In April 1988 I wrote an article in *Commentary* entitled "The Return of Eugenics." Some thought it alarmist at the time, but it hardly seems so today. From the end of the nineteenth century up through the end of World War II, eugenics was all the rage among many of the brightest and best. After the revelation of the nasty things the Nazis did in the name of eugenics, the movement kept a low profile for a while, but it hardly went away. In fact, American programs of eugenic sterilization were much admired by Hitler, and American foundations, notably those associated with the Rockefeller family, supported German eugenics both before and after Hitler came to power.

This doleful history is recounted in Rebecca Messall's essay "The Long Road of Eugenics: From Rockefeller to *Roe v. Wade*," in the Fall 2004 issue of the invaluable *Human Life Review*. Some may think the title is a reach too far, but it takes no imagination—only a measure of alertness—to connect the dots. Justice Harry Blackmun, the author of the *Roe* decision, is helpful. In footnote 62 of that decision, he favorably cited an article called "The New Biology and the Future of Man." The article says:

> Taken together, [artificial gestation, genetic engineering, suspended animation] constitute a new phase in human life in which man takes over deliberate control of his own evolution. And the consequence is arresting: There is a qualitative change to progress when man learns to create himself. . . . For our appropriate guidance in this new era, a reworking of values is required, which will take into account the new, and which will be as rapid and effective in its evolution as are the new techniques. . . . Our task will be easier if we regard value systems as complex adaptations to specific sets of realities, which adaptations must change when the realities change. . . . Chastity is not particularly adaptive to a world of effective contraception. . . . Respect for elders is less and less adaptive to a world in which life-spans greatly exceed the period during which great-grandchildren find their senior progenitor's wisdom of any interest. Submission to supernatural power is not adaptive to a world in which man himself controls even his own biological future. . . . High regard for the dignity of the individual may prove difficult to maintain when new biologic techniques blur his very identity. . . . What counts is awareness of the unmistakable new fact that in general new biology is handing over to us the wheel with which to steer directly the future evolution of man.

From "the future of man" to the "posthuman future" is a relatively short distance on "the long road of eugenics." In fairness, one notes that Blackmun and the Supreme Court were not necessarily endorsing everything in the article cited. But the citation occurs in a section of the majority opinion that is discussing the "theory of life" and criticizing the position that life begins at conception. "Substantial problems for precise definition of this view are posed, however, by new embryological data that purport to indicate that conception is a 'process' over time, rather than an event, and by new medical techniques such as menstrual extraction, the 'morning-after' pill, implantation of embryos, artificial insemination, and even artificial wombs." Both the citation of the article and the Court's own argument put *Roe* decisively on the side of plasticity in defining the *humanum* both in its beginning and possible future.

Of course there are necessary distinctions to be made. The very term "eugenics" is susceptible to different definitions. There is, for instance, a great difference between alleviating human suffering and redefining by redesigning the human. On the latter score, the classic and ever-relevant text is C.S. Lewis' *The Abolition of Man*, and the pertinent depiction of the society we may become is Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The latter-day futurists who are set upon turning science fiction into reality claim such texts are laughably outdated. We have, they say, already entered the world against which Lewis and Huxley warned, and there is no turning back on the long road traveled. The authentic humanism of biblical religion, inseparably joined to the civilizational tradition that is ours to preserve, rejects this dismal conclusion in proposing a better way forward.

FT

Why Democracy Is Not the Answer

Whenever I hear about a "liberal-conservative standoff," I feel the impulse, conciliatory soul that I am, to volunteer my services. Jay P. Dolan, in the Robert Cardinal Bellarmine Lecture at St. Louis University, says that such a standoff is what we have the minute the

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conversation turns to lay participation in the government of the Church. Dolan, emeritus at Notre Dame, is the author of *The American Catholic Experience*, a big and instructive textbook that is, I am told, still widely used in college courses. The gist of the book is that the American Catholic experience is, all in all, a great success because now Catholics are more or less like everybody else.

In his Bellarmine Lecture, "In Search of an American Catholicism," Dolan sharply criticizes John Paul II because, *inter alia*, "he sought to silence those who support a more open and tolerant Catholicism that is at home in the modern world." The loss of Catholic distinctiveness and being at home in a modern world that has lost its way are not my idea of goals to be desired or achievements to be celebrated. It appears that Prof. Dolan and I have serious disagreements.

But I want to be helpful in getting beyond the above-mentioned standoff, and so will touch on points of agreement. I expect he is right in saying that the system of "trusteeism" that prevailed in the nineteenth century for some thirty years has gotten a bum rap in the telling of Catholic history. In that system, laymen incorporated parishes, handled most of the business affairs, and in some cases chose and paid the pastors. Dolan blames foreign-born bishops who were ignorant of, or actively hostile toward, the American democratic ethos for squelching trusteeism and imposing a European model of "monarchical" episcopal rule over an utterly subservient laity. And it is true that to this day many pastors and bishops seem to live in fear of a revival of trusteeism, with the result that they expend their energies on micro-management, doing many things that lay people could do as well or better, and only grudgingly entertaining the counsel of the non-ordained. This compulsive need for control is an aspect of the deadening disease that is clericalism, which is widespread in the Church in America.

A workable division of labor has been a problem in the Church for a very long time. We are told in Acts that the apostles, in order to be freed from "waiting on tables" and able to give their full attention to the ministry of the Word, appointed deacons. The next thing we know, the deacon Stephen is preaching the Word and, as a consequence, getting himself martyred. We are not told whether he ever got around to waiting on tables. Bishops are ordained to "teach, sanctify, and govern" but many will admit that their day-by-day schedule leaves little doubt that the first two take a back seat to the third. Especially the first. The same is true of many pastors of parishes.

Dolan tells of a Bishop George Conroy who in 1878 was sent by the Holy See to evaluate the state of the Church in America. Conroy reported that many of the bishops were more "bankers than pastors," that they had little respect for the rights of the clergy, and were frequently chosen by a secretive process in which personal friendships counted more than qualifications for the office. Conroy's criticisms strike a contemporary chord. In Conroy's judgment, only ten of the sixty-eight bishops in the United States at that time were distinguished. "The rest," Dolan writes, "were mediocre, and, he believed, as far as theological understanding was concerned they were even less than mediocre."

Ten out of the sixty-eight is 15 percent. There are currently 194 bishops who are heads of dioceses, and it might be asked whether we have even that 15 percent now. Can one name twenty-nine distinguished American bishops serving today? One respectfully suggests that this is the kind of question that answers itself. Of course, we can quibble about the meaning of "distinguished." One possible measure is whether, if they were not bishops, they would by virtue of their talents, character (as in "holiness"), and intellectual or pastoral achievements be considered men of distinction.

So Dolan raises interesting questions. "Because of this affection for democracy," he writes, "people today expect more consultation and collaboration when it comes to the government of the Church at both the parish and diocesan levels." Consultation and collaboration to be sure. But then he and groups that he supports, such as Voice of the Faithful, make the confusing claim that the Church should be democratic. Apparently Dolan thinks it a good thing that for Americans "the voice of the people became the voice of God." He says the Church needs "more democracy," but the question is not more or less democracy, the question is democracy itself.

Democracy means that sovereignty resides in the *demos*, while in the Church sovereignty belongs to Christ and is exercised through his apostolic ordering of his body, the Church. Consultation, collaboration, participation, Yes. Democracy, No. Dolan acknowledges that "the Catholic creed is not subject to a popular vote" but he seems not to appreciate that the apostolic order of the Church is an essential part of the Catholic creed. America's democratic culture does produce the expectation that leaders be persuasively engaged with those whom they would lead. Effective leaders know that and welcome that. For the laity to be unquestioningly subservient to their bishops may have personal spiritual benefits for the laity, but it is very bad for bishops, spiritually and otherwise. Command and control is not the model of leadership enjoined by the Church's Lord.

If we are to move beyond the clericalist habits of episcopal arrogance and the standoff between liberals and conservatives, both of which Dolan laments, it

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must be agreed that—after all the consultation, collaboration, debate, and discussion—it is the bishop who is finally responsible, *iure divino*, for the government of the local church. Even the more distinguished of bishops will cling to autocratic ways as long as Prof. Dolan and those of like mind insist that the only alternative is "democracy."

While We're At It

■ Bishop Hugh Latimer was preaching in Westminster Abbey before King Henry VIII. In the pulpit Latimer soliloquized, "Latimer! Latimer! Latimer! Be careful what you say. The King of England is here." Then he continued, "Latimer! Latimer! Latimer! Be careful what you say. The King of Kings is here." That is from a fine book by Christopher Bryan, professor of New Testament at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford, 184 pages, $25). This very readable, closely argued, and assiduously documented book contends that Jesus and his followers had not the slightest interest in the forms or structures of temporal power, while they were adamant that power be held accountable to justice. "There were never any freedom fighters for Jesus," writes Bryan. On the other hand: "There is, however, an equal and opposite error to which we can tend—and this error is the particular temptation of those who have become suspicious of our preoccupation with power and our concern with structure. In most matters, of course, we are indeed powerless and had better not forget it. From potentate to peasant, we cannot by worrying add a cubit to our height (Matt. 6:27) or avoid the certainty of death. Yet, in some matters, from time to time, we are given power, as Adam was given power (and therefore also responsibility) to 'till and to keep' the garden. The error is to suppose that on such occasions we may *abandon* that power. We may not abandon it. 'The powers that be are ordained by God' (Rom. 13:1) is an assertion that does not cut only one way. Power, like any gift from God, is a sacred trust, and when those who have received it abandon their responsibility, the result is chaos. The Church has, at its best, realized this, and to dismiss such awareness of responsibility as 'neo-Constantinian' or as 'owing more to pagan philosophy than the church' simply will not do. Nathan's challenge to David—'You are the man!'—implicitly *demands* responsibility in the exercise of power, as do the words of the Johannine Christ to Pilate: 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above' (2 Sam. 12:7; John 19:11). Matthew's picture of Pilate washing his hands is—and is meant to be—contemptible (Matt. 27:24). The governor is no more 'innocent' of Jesus' blood after that act than he was before. One cannot by the renunciation of power become 'innocent' of something that one had the power to prevent. The parables of the talents and the pounds, in their own way, make the same point. Not to use one's gifts and powers, to act as if one did not have them or was not responsible for them, is merely to 'bury' them, and that is to incur God's wrath (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27)." Bryan concludes with two scriptural words to be kept always in mind by those who exercise power and by those who are responsible for holding power to moral account: "The kingdom of God is at hand," and, "God is not mocked." *Render to Caesar* is a valuable correction of certain forms of political theology, and also of pacifist and other abdications of political responsibility. It is, at the same time, a compelling call for the Church to muster the wisdom and courage to do its public duty. (Whether, in point of fact, Latimer did say what the King of Kings wanted the king of England to hear is a discussion for another time.)

■ Here is *Living it Up at National Review* by Priscilla L. Buckley (Spence, 247 pages, $27.95). Early on, the sister of William F. had the job of scouring all the newspapers, including the Communist Party's *Daily World*, which was sometimes tedious, although it had its moments. "The first dozen times one came across 'running dogs of imperialism,' it was kind of fun," writes the author, "but the fortieth time or fiftieth time, less so. But I persevered because of pearls such as Philip Bonosky's touching description of the death of the Communist Chilean poet Pablo Neruda: 'As he lay dying the greatest poet of our age rose from his bed of pain and delivered a curse on the betrayers of his country that will yet scare their corrupted bones. Voracious hyenas, hellish predators, rodents gnawing, satraps who have sold out a hundred times. Then he cursed them. And he named them: Nixon, [former Chilean president] Frei, Pinochet. He pronounced anathema on them. He indicted them: Prostituted vendors of the North American way of life, pimps of the whorish bosses. He hurled his contempt for them with his last breath.'" The delightful Priscilla Buckley goes delightfully on and on, recounting the jinks high and low that have accompanied fifty years with *National Review*. The cast of characters is colorful and the pace is lively, lending support to the rumor that the right has more fun than the left, which, like Neruda, seems so very angry. Although I rather doubt that even so great a poet

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managed the hurling of so much contempt with his dying breath.

■ "Study Finds 29-Week Fetuses Probably Feel No Pain and Need No Abortion Anesthesia," or so the *New York Times* announced, in a headline based on an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, which is admittedly based on no new research but offers the opinions of doctors who, it is said, have reviewed the pertinent literature. One of the article's co-authors runs an abortion clinic and another, David Grimes, is vice president of the pro-abortion organization Family Health International and has personally performed over ten thousand abortions, of which 10 to 20 percent were later than the first trimester. One notes that neonatologists who treat premature babies as young as twenty-three or twenty-four weeks have long observed their patients reacting to painful procedures by crying and jerking away, and they routinely administer anesthesia during surgery. For the *New York Times* and other pro-abortion publications, denying fetal pain is an important tactic in denying the humanity of these little people. To that end, we are asked to believe that they feel pain in surgery but not when they are being chopped to death. To believe this requires an ideological conditioning of the mind to which most people, fortunately, are strongly resistant.

■ In a generally favorable review of Alister McGrath's *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* (Doubleday), David Hart agrees that in a secular world that is suffering from what he elsewhere calls "metaphysical boredom," atheism is decidedly on the wane. He has a somewhat different take than McGrath, however, on what has brought us to the present circumstance. Writing in the *New Criterion*, Hart says: "As for why this should be, it is surely not enough to say merely that atheism fails to divert our thoughts from our mortality as religion supposedly used to do; television does that much better. It seems more correct to say that religion, far from suppressing the vitality of human reason and will, opens up a dimension coterminous with rational consciousness as such. In purely theoretical terms, the question of the transcendent source of reality is an ontological—not a causal—question: not how things have come to be what they are, but how it is that things exist at all. And none of the customary post-Christian attempts to make the question of being disappear can possibly succeed: even if physics can trace all of time and space back to a single self-sufficient set of laws, that those laws exist at all must remain an imponderable problem for materialist thought (for possibility, no less than actuality, must first of all be); all the brave efforts of analytic philosophy to conjure the ontological question away as a fallacy of grammar have failed and always will; continental philosophy's attempts at a non-metaphysical ontology are notable chiefly for their lack of explanatory power. In the terms of Thomas Aquinas, there is simply an obvious incommensurability between the essence and the existence of things, and hence finite reality cannot account for its own being. And if this incommensurability is considered with adequate probity and clarity, it cannot fail but lead reflection towards something like what Thomas calls the *actus essendi subsistens*—the subsistent act of being—which is one of his most beautiful names for God."

■ When, shortly after his election, John Paul II answered a shouted question by a reporter about whether he planned to go to Poland soon, a long-time Vatican observer was stunned. "That," he observed, "is the first time in at least two hundred years that a pope has responded to a question by a journalist." I don't know if that's true, but it is obvious that Pope Benedict is very much at ease with the give-and-take of informal conversations with journalists and others. In connection with the World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, he met with Orthodox and Protestant leaders, offering formal and impromptu remarks. He began, "Permit me to remain seated after such a strenuous day. This does not mean I wish to speak *ex cathedra*." With specific reference to the Protestants present, he said, "May I make a small comment: Now, it is said that following the clarification regarding the doctrine of justification, the elaboration of ecclesiological issues and the questions concerning ministry are the main obstacles still to be overcome. In short, this is true, but I must also say that I dislike this terminology, which from a certain point of view delimits the problem since it seems that we must now debate about institutions instead of the Word of God, as though we had to place our institutions in the centre and fight for them. I think that in this way the ecclesiological issue as well as that of the *ministerium* are not dealt with correctly. The real question is the presence of the Word in the world. In the second century the early Church primarily took a threefold decision: first, to establish the canon, thereby stressing the sovereignty of the Word and explaining that not only is the Old Testament *hai graphai* [the Scriptures], but together with the New Testament constitutes a single Scripture which is thus for us the master text. However, at the same time the Church has formulated an apostolic succession, the episcopal ministry, in the awareness that the Word and the witness go together; that is, the Word is alive and present only thanks to the witness, so to speak, and receives from the witness its interpretation. But the witness is only such if he or she

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witnesses to the Word. Third and last, the Church has added the *regula fidei* [rule of faith] as a key for interpretation. I believe that this reciprocal compenetration constitutes an object of dissent between us, even though we are certainly united on fundamental things. Therefore, when we speak of ecclesiology and of ministry we must preferably speak in this combination of Word, witness and rule of faith, and consider it as an ecclesiological matter, and therefore together as a question of the Word of God, of his sovereignty and humility inasmuch as the Lord entrusts his Word, and concedes its interpretation, to witnesses which, however, must always be compared to the *regula fidei* and the integrity of the Word. Excuse me if I have expressed a personal opinion; it seemed right to do so." The unity the Church seeks, he continued, "does not mean what could be called ecumenism of the return: that is, to deny and to reject one's own faith history. Absolutely not!" "It does not mean uniformity in all expressions of theology and spirituality, in liturgical forms and in discipline." Rather the goal is "unity in multiplicity, and multiplicity in unity." "It is obvious," he said, "that this dialogue can develop only in a context of sincere and committed spirituality. We cannot 'bring about' unity by our powers alone. We can only obtain unity as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, spiritual ecumenism—prayer, conversion, and the sanctification of life—constitutes the heart of the meeting and of the ecumenical movement."

■ According to the civics textbooks, politicians campaign for office, get elected, and then spend their time on governing until it is time to campaign again. In reality, it is increasingly the case that the campaigning never stops. Within the permanent campaign, however, there is still a "campaign season" in which more people pay serious attention. In the 2004 season, much attention was paid the minority of Catholic bishops who publicly challenged Catholic politicians who support the unlimited abortion license. Some said that such politicians should solemnly reconsider their relationship to the Church, others that they should refrain from receiving Communion, and yet others that they would be refused Communion. And there were bishops who did not disguise their unhappiness with bishops who even raised such awkward questions. Now Bishop Donald Wuerl of Pittsburgh is urging his fellow-bishops to get ready for the next campaign season, when the same questions will undoubtedly arise. In a very thoughtful essay, he notes that what a bishop does in one diocese can have a major impact on other dioceses, and can even shape a national debate affecting all bishops in all dioceses. While recognizing core Catholic teaching that a bishop is responsible for pastoral care and discipline in his diocese, which is the "local church," Wuerl accents the *affectus collegialis*, or collegial spirit, that should be cultivated among bishops, also through the national bishops conference. Bishops should not rudely surprise other bishops with their pastoral decisions. There should at least be, he writes, "an agreement among all of the bishops to refrain from making individual pastoral decisions that would impact upon all bishops until there was an opportunity for them to discuss the issue and the impact of a specific pastoral judgment." While Bishop Wuerl's concern for collegiality is undoubtedly legitimate, were such an agreement in place, it is almost certain that what many view as the courageous actions of a minority of bishops in 2004 would have been powerfully discouraged, and possibly stifled. The magisterial documents cited by Wuerl speak chiefly of episcopal unity in common doctrine and obedience to the Holy See. That unity is in no way questioned by bishops making different decisions about the pastoral application of doctrine. Against the ambitions of national conferences, Rome has strongly emphasized the responsibility of the bishop for the pastoral leadership of those in his care. In the 1998 apostolic letter *Apostolos Suos*, appropriately cited by Wuerl, John Paul II said that "bishops, whether individually or united in conference, cannot autonomously limit their own sacred power in favor of the episcopal conference, and even less can they do so in favor one of its parts." Bishop Wuerl is to be commended for urging his confreres to think ahead to the next campaign season, but what is urgently needed today, and has been needed for a very long time, is not greater coordination by the conference officialdom in the name of *affectus collegialis*. What is urgently needed is bishops who have the courage to be bishops, even if it ruffles the feathers of the brethren. There are bishops who unselfconsciously refer to the episcopacy as "the club" and have no higher praise for a fellow member of the club than to say he is a "team player." Collegiality is not to be confused with clerical clubbiness. As the National Review Board report of 2004 incisively noted, the failure of bishops to do their duty lest they disrupt episcopal business as usual was a big part of the toleration of sex abusers and the consequent scandal that erupted in January 2002. As long as they are clearly united in church teaching and adherence to the Holy See, there is no scandal in bishops making different pastoral judgments. The scandal is bishops who decline to be bishops.

■ It ought not offend pious sensibilities to observe that among bishops, too, peer pressure is a powerful dynamic. Also in the bishops' conference the maxim applies that one goes along to get along. It is an old

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story. A few years ago, Bernardin Cardinal Gantin, now retired as the prefect of the curial congregation for bishops, ruffled feathers by criticizing the episcopal careerism that is encouraged by bishops leaving smaller sees for larger and more prestigious sees. An American bishop tells the story of being appointed to his first see and assuring the people that his episcopal ring was a marriage ring signifying that he was united with them for life. About a year later he received a call from the papal nuncio, telling him that he had been appointed to another and larger diocese. "I can't do it," he told the nuncio. "I promised the people here that they are my wife." The nuncio dryly responded, "Your Excellency, your wife has just moved to _____" (naming the city). Cardinal Gantin was candid in his criticism, although not quite so blunt as the first canon of the Council of Sardica in 343: "There is no more injurious custom than the corrupt practice of a bishop moving from a small city to another. This must be rooted out. The reason is obvious. No one has ever yet been found who tried to move from a large city to a less important one. Such persons burn with covetousness and are slaves to ostentation and wish to gain greater authority." I cannot honestly say that I'm unhappy that the bishop of Yakima, Washington, is now in Chicago, or that the bishop of Rapid City, South Dakota, is in Denver. On the other hand, Hippo in northern Africa was a little like Yakima and Rapid City, and just think what the bishop of Hippo did and continues to do for the Church.

■ Jonathan Rauch in the *National Journal* writes under the headline, "America's anti-Reagan Isn't Hillary Clinton. It's Rick Santorum." He is reviewing Senator Santorum's new book *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good* (ISI, 464 pages, $25). In the American tradition, Rauch says, Goldwater and Reagan were with Madison and Jefferson in elevating freedom over virtue, while Santorum is with John Adams and Washington in reversing that order. Rauch's argument is not entirely unpersuasive, and Santorum does seem to have more confidence in government interventions—big government, if you will—than may be warranted. But the same Reagan who said that government is not the solution but the problem also focused government attention on social problems, especially those affecting the family. Goldwater was very different. He was a libertarian, as witness his pro-abortion and pro-homosexuality positions of later years. "The bold new challenge to the Goldwater-Reagan tradition in American politics comes not from the Left but from the Right," writes Rauch. This announcement comes a little late. The virtues-oriented base of the Republican Party, strongly assisted by Reagan, has been with us for a decade now. Senators Clinton and Santorum may agree on the importance of virtue, but they have very different understandings of virtue, as witness, for starters, their approach to the legal protection of unborn children and the irreplaceability of the traditional family. The philosophical argument over the relationship between liberty and virtue has been with us for a very long time. And for a very long time, politically speaking, so has the shift belatedly discovered by Jonathan Rauch.

■ Another alarming alert from the Anti-Defamation League: "In a disturbing new trend, neo-Nazi groups around the country are hijacking local community events and ADL is leading the fight to confront this menace." Well, perhaps not around the country, but in Cadillac, Michigan, the city asked for volunteers to help pick up the litter in the parks. It seems four young people of the National Socialist Movement (*aka* skinheads) showed up to lend a hand. The mayor, Ronald Blanchard, had a big stack of certificates of appreciation for participating groups and the NSM also received one. The pace quickens: "ADL sprang into action and contacted Mayor Blanchard, expressing our outrage over the city's de-facto endorsement of the NSM. Along with incensed community members, we asked city leaders to apologize for honoring the racist group and revoke the certificate." A city spokesman said he didn't think an apology was necessary, saying, "Hey, they're a volunteer group. It was an honest mistake." It's about what you'd expect from someone who de facto endorses Nazism, although, to be fair, he probably didn't know that Adolf Eichmann started out by picking up litter in the parks of Solingen, the little town where he was born in North Rhine-Westphalia. The ADL alert continues: "The citizens of Cadillac, appalled by the response of their local officials, invited the ADL to a town hall meeting to confront the issue." One World War II veteran said he never thought he would be "fighting Nazis in my backyard." The four kids are possibly pleased by the thought they've started another world war. At the meeting, a task force was formed and it called upon the city to buy into ADL programs in sensitizing teachers and police officers. So all's well that ends well. Admittedly, not so well for Mayor Blanchard who has been labeled a supporter of Nazism by the ADL. And not so well for the ten thousand people of Cadillac who did not call in the ADL, along with their teachers and cops, who are declared to be, at the very least, insensitive to the evils of National Socialism and in need of ADL reeducation. But hey, doing battle with Hitler in the American heartland may be dirty work, but somebody has to do it. You can count on the ADL to spring into action. Coming soon:

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An ADL defamation and reeducation program near you. Recognizing that eternal outrage is the price of liberty and the key to fundraising, the ADL bulletin highlights the appeal: "Help ADL Fight Neo-Nazis. Donate Now!"

■ At the June meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America, two veteran ecumenical theologians reflected on forty years of Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue. Father George H. Tavard is a priest of the Augustinians of the Assumption. In describing an early meeting in 1965, he makes a noteworthy observation: "There was in the planning meeting no extensive discussion of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. We nevertheless agreed that, although it was hotly contested in the sixteenth century, the question of justification—by faith alone, or by faith and good works?—is not a problem today between the two Churches. Both sides agree in doctrine and practice that no one is justified by personal intentions and actions, but only by faith in the redeeming life, death, and rising of Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, good intentions and actions following as normal developments in a life of faith." The decision of the meeting was to focus not on justification but on the Nicene Creed. How the easy assumption of 1965 gave way to the intense work that produced the 1999 *Joint Declaration on Justification* is a fascinating tale. On the Lutheran side, Dr. John Reumann was also present at the creation, and he offers an informative account of the serious work that earned the Lutheran-Roman Catholic effort the crown of ecumenical dialogues. He twice emphasizes, however, and in italics, that "*our convergences have not carried over into studies, let alone decision-making and church life*." He notes that in the recent ELCA study on sexuality "there seems to have been little inclination to note and consider Roman Catholic views on homosexuality," with more attention being paid to "pro-gay-lesbian positions in the Episcopal Church and the United Church of Christ." Yet over the forty years the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue did produce ten scholarly volumes and other work in which "future generations may find resources . . . for new contours, of which we cannot now know." The tone of both Tavard and Reumann is somewhat doleful and their expressions of hope for the future wan. Both affectionately recall the Lutheran theologian Arthur Carl Piepkorn who embodied in the early years the sense of high promise for what some of us called the healing of the breach of the sixteenth century between Rome and the Reformation. Perhaps, as Reumann says, future generations, learning from the achievements and disappointments of these forty years, will take up that project with renewed confidence.

■ Actress Jane Fonda's 1998 conversion to Christianity received considerable attention. She recently told the *Baltimore Sun*, "I believe people have different ways of approaching the Word. For me, it's metaphor, written by people a long time after Christ died and interpreted by specific groups. I read the gospels that aren't included in the Bible. These make me feel good about calling myself a Christian." She may be on to something. The ones that are in the Bible sometimes make me feel bad about calling myself a Christian.

■ I lift this from Martin Marty's newsletter *Context*, as he lifted it from the *Utne Reader*: "Religion professor Paul Powers of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon: 'Softheaded spiritualism is its own form of fundamentalism. The suggestion that the 'true essence' of all religions is spirituality implies that if only people were not so stupid as to believe what their tradition teaches them, they would see that behind all this mere cultural baggage is the supreme 'spiritual' truth. Religions and religious people are mind-bogglingly different. Why American liberals who seem so happy to embrace difference in various contexts want, when it comes to religion, to sweep [all differences] under the rug of some invented, undefined, supposedly universal 'spirituality' remains one of the true religious mysteries of our times."

■ I confess to being less impressed by Marty's quotation of poet Maya Angelou: "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." Only a writer, psychoanalyst, gossip, or narcissist could believe that. Or, more innocently, a five year-old child.

■ The growing controversy over evolution—what it is and how it should be taught—is about much more than evolution. Here is then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in a lecture delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris and now published in *Truth and Tolerance*: "The separation of physics from metaphysics achieved by Christian thinking is being steadily canceled. Everything is to become 'physics' again. The theory of evolution has increasingly emerged as the way to make metaphysics disappear, to make 'the hypothesis of God' (Laplace) superfluous, and to formulate a strictly 'scientific' explanation of the world. A comprehensive theory of evolution, intended to explain the whole of reality, has become a kind of 'first philosophy,' which represents, as it were, the true foundation for an enlightened understanding of the world. Any attempt to involve any basic elements other than those worked out within the terms of such a 'positive' theory, any attempt at 'metaphysics,' necessarily appears as a relapse from the standards of enlightenment, as abandoning the univer-

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sal claims of science." At stake is a human and Christian truth that cannot ultimately be demonstrated but upon which everything depends. "The question is whether reason, or rationality, stands at the beginning of all things and is grounded in the basis of all things or not. The question is whether reality originated on the basis of chance and necessity (or, as Popper says, in agreement with Butler, on the basis of luck and cunning) and, thus, from what is irrational; that is, whether reason, being a chance by-product of irrationality and floating in an ocean of irrationality, is ultimately just as meaningless; or whether the principle that represents the fundamental conviction of Christian faith and of its philosophy remains true: *In principio erat Verbum*—at the beginning of all things stands the creative power of reason. Now as then, Christian faith represents the choice in favor of the priority of reason and of rationality. This ultimate question, as we have already said, can no longer be decided by arguments from natural science, and even philosophical thought reaches its limits here. In that sense, there is no ultimate demonstration that the basic choice involved in Christianity is correct. Yet, can reason really renounce its claim to the priority of what is rational over the irrational, the claim that the Logos is at the ultimate origin of things, without abolishing itself?"

■ As was to be expected, among the first acts in the pontificate of Pope Benedict was the strong reaffirmation of the Catholic Church's irrevocable commitment to ecumenism and the quest for full communion among all Christians. By virtue of his background, Benedict brings to this task a greater familiarity with the separated communions of the West than was possessed initially by John Paul II whose Polish experience was more oriented to the East. For many reasons, relations with the Orthodox East will continue to have priority in Catholicism's ecumenical efforts, but Benedict's long history of interaction with the communities issuing from the sixteenth-century division in the West is thought to be a major asset. It is therefore deeply regretted that some of those communities are in recent years pulling back from the ecumenical task. The Joint Declaration on Justification, signed between Lutherans and Catholics in 1999, has been widely attacked by Lutheran theologians in Germany, and in 2004 the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany issued a statement that suggests, writes ecumenical scholar Geoffrey Wainwright in *Pro Ecclesia*, it may be repudiating the entire ecumenical enterprise of the past one hundred years. The text limits the goal of ecumenism to "cooperation" among separated Christians, and insists that dialogue with others can proceed only "from within the Lutheran perspective." Wainwright observes, "Even where a common understanding of the gospel has not (yet) been achieved between the confessional bodies, it contemplates an immediate mutual invitation of members to participation in word and sacrament; without doctrinal or institutional unity, communion is thus reduced to the individual level." This idea of unity, he says, risks ending up with nothing more than "unreconciled denominationalism." A similar argument was made in John Paul the Great's last encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. Welcoming everyone to Holy Communion, which some think is a very ecumenical thing to do, is in fact a formula for the end of ecumenism. It assumes that our differences over the truth of doctrine and the right ordering of the Church really make no difference. We commune together and then go on in our separate ways, thus abandoning the goal of full communion. The German statement seems to posit a Church (capital C) that exists above and beyond any actual existing church. "If that were so," says Wainwright, the Germans "would by this document be endorsing a docetism of the most insidious kind." Docetism is the ancient (and recurring) heresy that Christ only seemed to have a human body and to suffer and die on the cross. The real Christ is above and beyond ordinary history. As there is christological docetism, so also there is ecclesiological docetism, and among many Christians it enervates or even negates the quest for full communion. It is at best a loss of nerve, at worst a rejection of Christ's high-priestly prayer for his disciples (see John 17).

■ Don't we know how pushy those evangelical Christians can be? That is among the questions raised in protest against what I thought was a rather light-hearted comment in the October issue about the problem of "pervasive religion" at the Air Force Academy in Colorado. Well yes, some people—not only evangelicals and not only Christians—can be pretty obnoxious in pressing their convictions on others. And not only their religious convictions. Their causes would be better served by the learning of elementary good manners. An almost certain way of exacerbating bad manners in the public square is to try to impose good manners by regulations of law. Civilization, as has often been observed, depends upon obedience to the unenforceable, which is another way of saying that civilization depends upon civility. In my commentary I suggested—in a spirit of what now appears to have been unwarranted hopefulness—that that lesson had been learned at the Air Force Academy. But here is a Laurie Goodstein story in the *New York Times* with the headline "Air Force Bans Leaders' Promotion of Religion." It seems new Air Force guidelines will proscribe anything that might be perceived as favoring a particular

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religion or even, according to the proposed text, "the idea of religion over nonreligion." The guidelines were largely drafted by Rabbi Arnold E. Resnicoff, a former navy chaplain and former director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, who was hired as special assistant to the secretary and chief of staff of the Air Force. The need for such guidelines had been pressed by Representative Steve Israel of New York, an influential member of the House Armed Services Committee, and Mikey Weinstein, an academy graduate who has agitated against the Christian tenor of activities at the school. A professor of law at Yeshiva University is quoted on the new rules: "What I liked about them is they went so far out of their way to say the government should not be endorsing religion, because that's not always been true in the military." That, one might observe, is a breathtaking understatement. From George Washington's Farewell Address and throughout American history, government leaders have strongly and explicitly endorsed religion, and nowhere has that been so emphatically the case as in the military. The attempt to extirpate religion from the official life of the military is a rewriting of history in the name of pluralism and sensitivity. Despite the adage that there are no atheists in foxholes, there have always been those in the military who dissent from the dominant religious affirmation. They were and are a small minority. The new thing, following a half century of Supreme Court rulings in hostility to religion, is the idea that a minority has the right to be protected from reminders that it is a minority. This gives even the smallest minority effective veto power over the public voice under government auspices, and nothing is more comprehensively under government auspices than the military. Anything the minority deems offensive or not to its liking must be excluded. Also in the military, the protocols of civility are subject to negotiation, but the new Air Force regulations are riddled with confusions that are likely to increase the putative problems they are designed to resolve. For instance, says the *Times*, "they allow for 'a brief nonsectarian prayer' at special ceremonies like those honoring promotions, or in 'extraordinary circumstances' like 'mass casualties, preparation for imminent combat and natural disasters.'" Is a mention of Jesus or Sinai sectarian? How brief is "brief," and how many casualties are required to warrant an extra minute of prayer time? Perhaps most important, why should the government endorse or any observant Jew, Christian, or Muslim go along with the idea that public prayer should be limited to "extraordinary circumstances"? The limitation of prayer to moments of great mourning or danger encourages the most debased notion of "the God of the gaps"—of religion in the form of last-resort superstition reserved for times of crisis. Although one notes that prayer will be permitted also for "honoring promotions," which perhaps reflects the belief of the Air Force in the dubious notion that God has a hand in its personnel decisions. The proposed regulations are a prime instance of attempting to turn faith into a tame and inoffensive civil religion that should offend everyone who understands that the nation and its military are "under God"—meaning the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Who cannot be recruited to anyone's service. All that having been said, I am reliably informed that some evangelical officers at the Air Force Academy were seriously out of line in using their rank to promote their faith on military time. If true, that needed to be corrected, but is better corrected by obedience to the unenforceable than by regulations that invite evasion.

■ Rabbi Joshua Haberman of Washington, D.C., once observed that America's Bible Belt is his safety belt. Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute agrees. Writing in *Christianity Today*, he tells Christians, and evangelical Christians in particular, that "you've become, beneath the radar screens of the national press, America's most powerful force for human rights progress. And you've done it as Christians whose biblical commands have made your silence impossible in the face of slavery and genocide." Although he doesn't say so, Horowitz, a Jew, has played an invaluable part in recruiting evangelicals to the cause of human rights. As under Nazi and Soviet persecution those who defended Jews were defending all, so also, Horowitz writes: "The battle over worldwide Christian persecution is a battle for the freedom of all—all the more so because the explosive global spread of Christianity has made the paradigmatic Christian a poor and brown third-world female rather than the white middle-class Western male that your patronizing detractors paint you to be." Horowitz also has words of advice. It is too easy to defeat the possible better in the quest for the impossible best. "You can get more support than you may imagine possible by avoiding utopian overreach; doing so can, without sacrifice of principle, broaden the support you can achieve. Take, for example, the hot-button issue of abortion. Many in the Christian community denounced the wise and shrewd leaders who conceived of the partial-birth abortion initiative. Its critics demeaned the initiative as barely half a slice of the full-loaf reform that was needed. They argued that the reform would have the overall effect of legitimizing abortion even if it succeeded. Those critics were wrong. They did not understand that success has ripple effects. They did not understand how much more could be achieved by framing the issue to allow false caricatures

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of evangelicals to be shattered. Americans' views of abortion have shifted by more than 20 percent since the onset of the partial-birth abortion debate and largely because of it. It has put the pro-abortion community on the defensive. And it all happened because wise Christian leaders picked a target that was winnable, and framed an issue that revealed abortion's underlying nature. Those leaders may have wanted to pass more far-reaching anti-abortion legislation, but knew they couldn't on both legal/constitutional and political grounds. They were tough-minded. They didn't sacrifice principle. And, more than perhaps even they expected, they began to reach others not previously on their side as they began to change the terms of the abortion debate." The goal of comprehensive legal protection for the unborn is not, I believe, an instance of "utopian overreach," but Horowitz is right in saying that the focus on partial birth abortion played a powerful role in changing the terms of the continuing conflict over abortion. And he is right in understanding the ways in which the mobilization of evangelicals—as explained by Allen Hertzke in "The Shame of Darfur" (FT October)—has transformed the never-ending campaign for human rights.

■ Already underway is a major visitation to evaluate about 160 Catholic seminaries and houses of formation. The visitation began late September and is scheduled to be completed by the first week of May 2006. In some circles, there is considerable skepticism. There was a similar visitation in the 1980s and it apparently did not catch the problems related, however directly or indirectly, to the sex abuse scandal that erupted in 2002 and continues to send shock waves through every level of the Church's life. This visitation, we are assured, will be different. The most important difference is that Rome is unequivocally in charge. Reports from the visitation teams will go directly to the congregation for education in Rome without being vetted in advance by seminary rectors or local bishops. The visitors will look at everything being taught and done in the seminaries, with particular reference to moral theology as it relates to priestly formation, and with most particular reference to celibacy. Here, inescapably, homosexuality comes in for serious attention. No doubt some have exaggerated the incidence of homosexual orientation or activity among Catholic clergy, but more than 80 percent of the relatively small number of priests involved in sex abuse were involved with post-pubescent boys and young men. And there is no doubt about the hundreds of priests, seminarians, and ex-seminarians who testify to the existence of "gay-friendly" institutions powerfully influenced, if not dominated, by "lavender mafias." The visitors will include forty-five bishops, sixty priests, and twenty-five lay experts, and the whole thing is coordinated by Archbishop Edward O'Brien of the military vicariate. He will not be a part of the three- to five-member visiting teams but is working closely with Rome, and especially with Archbishop Michael Miller of the Congregation for Education, a widely and justly admired scholar who is thoroughly familiar with the American situation. The visiting teams will spend a week at each seminary, house of formation, or theological union (such as those at Chicago and Berkeley), interviewing faculty and every student individually. Priests who have been ordained in the last three years and others who know the institution will also be invited to testify. Interviews will be *sub secreto*, meaning the participants are vowed to secrecy. It is alleged that during the visitation of the 1980s, some schools created Potemkin villages, putting on a front of fidelity to the magisterium and moral discipline, while carefully scripting in advance what students should tell the visitors. This time, we are told, the visitors will be alert to any such signs of dissembling. "This is not a witch hunt," says one bishop involved. "Our entire purpose is to help these places be better. We understand that some faculties are fearful. They should not be. Except for those who have a reason to be afraid." At this point, it seems to me, confidence in the visitation now underway is justified. The process has been carefully thought through, the determination of those in charge is manifest. The firm intention is that what is right will be reinforced, what is wrong will be remedied, and what is rotten will be removed. Perhaps most important, Rome is in charge and Rome is resolved to help get priestly formation in America back on course. Obviously, results are not guaranteed, but attentive hopefulness is fully warranted.

■ At the World Youth Day in Cologne, Pope Benedict met with a delegation of Muslim leaders, whom he repeatedly addressed as "dear and esteemed Muslim friends." He said, "Thanks be to God, we agree on the fact that terrorism of any kind is a perverse and cruel choice which shows contempt for the sacred right to life and undermines the very foundations of all civil coexistence." He then underscored the responsibility of Muslim educators to make sure that younger Muslims share that understanding. He added, "The dignity of the person and the defense of the rights which that dignity confers must represent the goal of every social endeavor and of every effort to bring it to fruition. This message is conveyed to us unmistakably by the quiet but clear voice of conscience. It is a message which must be heeded and communicated to others: Should it ever cease to find an echo in peoples' hearts, the world would be exposed to the darkness of a new barbarism."

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It was, as is usual with Benedict, a carefully crafted statement reflecting his rejection of an inevitable "clash of civilizations" and affirming dialogue without delusions. Whatever the difficulties, and they are formidable, the alternative is "the darkness of a new barbarism." Speaking of the history of Christian-Muslim relations, he said, "We know only too well what atrocities have been committed in the name of religion." In sharpest contrast to those who dream of a world in which religion fades away, Benedict underscores that the remedy for the abuse of religion is religion firmly grounded in obedience to God's will for peace among all peoples. In response to the pope's remarks, a Muslim spokesman said, "We wholeheartedly support the process of dialogue launched and pursued by the Vatican." The spokesman, Ridvan Cakir of the Turkish Islamic Union (most Muslims in Germany, about four percent of the population, are from Turkey) also said, "The process of Turkey's accession to the European Union is also an important occasion, one that should be judged in this context [of dialogue]." Before he became pope, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger expressed grave misgivings about the consequences of redefining "Europe" to include Turkey. The Cologne encounter, while described as cordial, reflected both the tentativeness and necessity of dialogue without delusions.

■ Admittedly, the vocabulary is a bit on the clunky side, but the editors of *Christianity Today* are on to something important. Following the lead of a number of influential evangelicals—John R.W. Stott, Richard Halverson, Richard Mouw—they call for a "remonasticization" of the churches in which "remonks" would model for church and world what it means to really follow Christ. "North American evangelicals are now acutely awake to the fact that they live in a post-Christian culture," the editors write. "It is a culture dominated by the mechanisms and mentality of consumerism, and facilitated by mass media that penetrate every nook and cranny of the country." That culture, they say, has also penetrated evangelical Protestantism, which has its own patterns of celebritydom and obsessions with worldly success. I will not here repeat my argument that ours is not a post-Christian culture but an incorrigibly and confusedly Christian culture for which we must accept responsibility. The merits of monasticism do not depend upon *Christianity Today*'s cultural analysis. In the absence of a strong and deep ecclesiology, American Protestantism has always been prone to embrace America as its church, and to react with angry disillusionment when America fails to live up to that role. The editors are on more solid ground when they connect the need for monasticism to "the call to holiness" and the indispensability of communities with a disciplined commitment to the "life of prayer." Flannery O'Connor reflected on the possibility of Protestant monasticism in a letter of 21 June, 1959, that is included in the splendid collection, *The Habit of Being*. Her letter was occasioned by the "beat generation" of that time. She wrote: "If you took Christ, the Church, law and dogma out of Christianity, you would have something like Zen left. The beat people's need for it witnesses to their need for the contemplative life. Do you think it would be possible for Protestantism ever to come up with a form of monasticism? I asked a divine from Mercer [University] that, and he said 'No.' In any case if there could be such a thing in Protestantism, a lot of these people could be salvaged from Zen. . . . For us the Church is the body of Christ, Christ continuing in time, and as such a divine institution. The Protestant considers this idolatry. If the Church is not a divine institution, it will turn into an Elks Club." *Christianity Today* proposes strongly intentional communities of families, a form of life followed, however differently, by Hutterites and some Catholic charismatics, but they accent the importance of a more "radical" commitment in communities of service that are pledged to poverty and celibacy. The third "evangelical counsel," obedience, is not mentioned. The history of factionalism and division over questions of leadership in Christian communities is notorious. Evangelicals interested in acting on the *Christianity Today* proposal would do well to read closely the sixth-century Rule of St. Benedict, the *magna carta* of western monasticism, with special attention to obedience. Community life must be ecclesially embedded in ways that may be difficult for Protestants. At the same time, the Taizé community in France, founded half a century ago by Roger Schutz and Max Thurian, provides one suggestive model. The editorial, "Remonking the Church," is a bold proposal and one hopes it is not just a passing fancy. The evangelical historian Mark Noll has written about the "episodic and reactive" nature of evangelical enthusiasms, to which one might add a propensity for reinventing the wheel. The *Christianity Today* proposal is deserving of serious and sustained exploration.

■ My dear friend Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel was fond of saying, "Interfaith dialogue begins with faith." That maxim is exemplified in the distinguished work of Rabbi David Novak, a Heschel student and head of Judaic studies at the University of Toronto, and now he has put much of that work together in an important new book, *Talking with Christians* (Eerdmans, 269 pages, $25). Novak played a key role in the production of *Dabru Emet* ("Speak the Truth"), a statement of hundreds of Jewish scholars on the significance for

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Jews and Judaism of Christians and Christianity. (For full text, see FT, November 2000.) It is a great pity, in fact a great scandal, that the major Jewish organizations and their Christian counterparts in what is called the Jewish-Christian dialogue have ignored the singular achievement that is *Dabru Emet*. Especially on the Jewish side, the organizational penchant is to avoid questions of theology and faith, reducing the dialogue to an exercise in intergroup relations and endless rehashings of the problems of anti-Semitism. It was that penchant that prompted Rabbi Heschel's maxim in the first place. It is to the great credit of Novak that he has relentlessly persisted in deepening the questions that Jews and Christians must address together. *Talking with Christians* includes a number of essays that originally appeared in the pages of FIRST THINGS. They and others range over a wide array of subjects that have engaged Novak's impressive learning and original mind, including Karl Barth on divine command, Maimonides and Aquinas on natural law, the theological and communal status of Jews who become Christians, and Jewish strengths and weaknesses in speaking to moral conflicts in the public square. Let me put it simply: Anyone who has a substantial interest in Jewish-Christian relations and the question of Judaism's importance to Christianity, and vice versa, must read *Talking with Christians*. If David Novak and the more reflective among Christian interlocutors have their way, the day may yet come when interfaith dialogue begins with faith.

■ So much for Paul, Origen, Cyprian, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Ambrose, and Bernard—to say nothing of the writers of the four Gospels. In fact, so much for Christian biblical interpretation prior to the dawn of "modern" biblical scholarship in the aftermath of the Enlightenment. Dr. John Jaeger of Dallas Baptist University recently reviewed the first volume in a new series, "The Church's Bible," under the general editorship of Robert Louis Wilken and published by Eerdmans. The first volume is composed of judiciously selected commentary on the Song of Songs and is edited by the distinguished historian Richard A. Norris, Jr. In the early patristic and medieval periods, the Bible was understood to be all of a piece and through various allegorical and other interpretive strategies was displayed as the "whole counsel of God" centered in the revelation of God in Christ. "The Church's Bible" is an exciting project that provides extended commentaries by the fathers of the Church, boldly proposing that we reclaim scriptural interpretation for the believing community. Biblical scholarship should not be, as it has largely become, an antiquarian specialty of the academy. In short, it is the Church's Bible before it is the academy's. Jaeger, writing in *Christian Librarian*, is unimpressed. "Biblical interpretation for several centuries," he writes, "has emphasized that the literal meaning of the text is most significant. . . . It is difficult to find a reason to recommend this commentary, given that the methods of interpretation used are no longer very relevant." It would seem Dr. Jaeger is just catching up with the academic prejudices of the last several centuries. Solidly positioned on the reflective far side of the crippling "relevance" of the past, "The Church's Bible" is a bold project aimed at reclaiming the scriptural text in the service of Christian truth. Contra John Jaeger, it is strongly recommended for preachers and teachers of the faith who are weary of refracting biblical texts through the atheological academic fretwork of the literal-historical-critical obsession with what they "really mean."

■ In my critique of Kenneth Collins' *The Evangelical Moment*, I attributed to him the claim that 40 percent of the members of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) reject the idea of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Prof. Collins points out that he was only following sociologist James Davison Hunter who reports that 40 percent of "evangelical theologians" reject the idea. Membership in ETS, Collins notes, requires the affirmation of inerrancy. How many of Hunter's 40 percent also belong to ETS is quite another matter.

■ A reader objects that my comments (August/September) on Steven Levitt—who claims that the abortion license has contributed dramatically to the decline in crime by killing in the womb those most inclined to criminality—failed to mention the contrary argument by John Lott and John Whitley that the abortion license has actually contributed to an increase in crime by exacerbating family instability and, consequently, youthful criminality. (The Lott-Whitley study can be found on the Internet: "Yale Law & Economics Research Paper No. 254.") In fact, I favorably commented on the Lott-Whitley argument in the October 2001 issue of FIRST THINGS. My comment on the Levitt claims was not intended to take sides with regard to the facts but to highlight the abhorrence of the moral reasoning encouraged, however inadvertently, by Levitt.

■ Here's an editorial in a magazine on the Catholic right that claims the editors of FIRST THINGS are either dupes or willing collaborators in the neocon designs of "corporate capitalism" and the supporters of a "militaristic U.S. foreign policy" to take over the world. What we are doing is "reminiscent of how the Communist Party operated in the U.S." "The CP set up

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front groups for religious people to advance the CP line," says the editorial, in much the way that First Things is a front group for the neocon cabal. Such hysteria, whether on the right or left, is usually undeserving of comment, but then I was struck by the editorialist's claim that "Fr. Richard John Neuhaus said he gets a 'princely salary.'" That's news to me, so I checked out the editorial's reference to our December 1998 issue. There I was discussing our policy in accepting or rejecting advertisements and wrote this: "We cannot and would not require that advertisers agree with all our judgments. We can and will make judgments about what is mean-spirited, malicious, in violation of good taste, or seriously false. Yes, making such judgments is difficult, but that's why editors are paid such princely salaries. With the cooperation of our advertisers, we hope the necessity for such judgments will be few and far between." Apparently the writer of the editorial is unfamiliar with irony. An additional and not unamusing twist is that the occasion of my comment was the repugnant advertisements for the very magazine in which the above-mentioned editorial appears. Those advertisements, like much that appears in that magazine, are mean-spirited, malicious, in violation of good taste, and seriously false.

■ The problem was exacerbated by the sensationalist novel *The Da Vinci Code*, but it existed long before that. As it happens, some folks in Opus Dei tried to turn the novel's popularity into lemonade by inviting curious readers to tour Opus Dei centers and learn more about the organization. But it will take a lot more than that to overcome the public relations difficulties of Opus Dei (meaning "the Work of God" and commonly called "the Work"). John Allen's latest book, *Opus Dei*, is just out from Doubleday (320 pages, $24.95). The promise of the subtitle—"an objective look behind the myths and reality of the most controversial force in the Catholic Church"—is fully kept. Allen visited Opus Dei centers and apostolates in Europe, North America, Latin America, and Africa, and talked with hundreds of members and supporters. He also provides a succinct history of the Work from its 1928 founding in Spain by Josemaria Escriva, now Saint Josemaria, as well as a lucid description of its organization, rules, and finances. In all this he says he had the complete cooperation of the organization, which is known as a personal prelature because it is unique among institutions in the Church in having its own bishop to govern internal affairs while members are, like all Catholics, also responsible to the bishop of the local church where they live and work. An additional strength of the book is that Allen gives a fair hearing, maybe more than a fair hearing, to critics of Opus Dei, including the network of those who, for whatever reason, left the organization and have made a life's work of attacking it as a secretive and dangerous cult. As Allen well understands, Opus Dei, like other "controversial" institutions in the Church—the Legionaries of Christ comes to mind—is emphatically not for everybody. Any institution that takes seriously its distinctive "charism" will inevitably have a strong sense of "us" and "them," which, also inevitably, leads to the charge that its members are "elitist," and to hard feelings on the part of those who feel left out. Allen explores these dynamics with assiduous fairness, examining the claim that the Work is devious in its eagerness to recruit new members and the opposite claim, frequently made by the same critics, that it is stand-offish and arrogantly exclusive. Opus Dei is emphatically a lay phenomenon dedicated to the sanctification of work in the secular world. It has about 87,000 lay members around the world and 1,850 priests to provide spiritual direction and support. Although its influence is sometimes exaggerated by members, the Work's emphasis on the "universal call to holiness" did anticipate, even if it did not precipitate, Vatican II's affirmation of the vocation of the laity in the world. There is hardly a question or criticism about Opus Dei that Allen does not address. One has the distinct impression that, during the course of his research and writing, he came to a much more favorable view of the organization than the one with which he began. At least the conventional objections and misgivings were, one by one, more or less resolved. My own more limited experience with Opus Dei over the years pretty much squares with John Allen's conclusions. Although I'm a bit uneasy with his recommendations that the Work should downplay some of the things that make it so very different and therefore "controversial." There is no point in being different for the sake of being different, but in its difference is a large part of its strength. In any event, *Opus Dei* is a book that has been needed for a very long time, but it awaited the meeting of the organization's growing confidence with a journalist who was determined to get the story right. Institutional confidence and journalistic fairness have joined in producing a book from which future discussions about Opus Dei should begin.

■ "Where orthodoxy is optional..." The Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church placed the Rev. Edward Johnson on involuntary leave of absence without pay for refusing church membership to a man who was unrepentant about living in a sexual relationship with another man. The man, said Johnson, was living in violation of both Scripture and the Methodist *Book of Discipline*. Bishop Charlene

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Kammerer of Virginia explained to a local newspaper that no Methodist minister "has the authority to exclude anyone from joining the church." This is an inclusive church, and those who don't like it can go elsewhere.

■ It was officially entitled "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," but was commonly called the "Moynihan Report," after the late senator from New York. That was 1965, and forty years later the black family, notably in the urban underclass, is by every measure in yet more desperate straits. All the more reason to welcome "God's Gift: A Christian Vision of Marriage and the Black Family," a fifty-five-page, very handsomely published statement from the Seymour Institute, which is headed by the Rev. Eugene Rivers, one of the country's most dynamic black leaders. The document presents a solidly orthodox view backed up by careful social science demonstrating that there simply is no way a community can flourish unless it is solidly rooted in the marriage-based family. Recognizing the singular leadership role of the black church, the document was sent to pastors with an urgent appeal that they, at long last, confront a crisis that many would prefer to ignore. Regrettably, the report has received little or no notice in the general media. Although Adrian Walker, a *Boston Globe* columnist, did object to the statement's understanding of family. "Note, please, what is excluded in that description: interracial families, any kind of nontraditional family, and, especially, any representation of gay marriage, which Rivers—like much of the local black clergy—vigorously opposes." No surprises there. "God's Gift" deserves the widest possible distribution and discussion. For more information: Seymour Institute, 411 Washington St., Boston, Massachusetts 02124 (*www.seymourinstitute.org*).

■ Except for confirmed Luddites, there should be no problem with the claim that the damage done or threatened by technology can sometimes be effectively countered by technology. That promises to be the case with alternatives to the use and destruction of embryonic stem cells (see Maureen Condic, "Stem Cells & Babies," August/September). The promise receives further and impressive support from a June statement signed by more than thirty scientists and ethicists following a consultation sponsored by the Westchester Institute for Ethics and the Human Person, a project of the Legionaries of Christ. The statement is entitled "Production of Pluripotent Stem Cells by Oocyte-Assisted Reprogramming," and a copy is available from the director of the institute, Fr. Thomas Berg at The Westchester Institute, P.O. Box 78, 582 Columbus Avenue, Thornwood, New York 10594 (*tberg@westchesterinstitute.net*).

■ If the idolization of the flag is the alternative to the burning of the flag, there is something to be said for the burning of the flag. The parish bulletin of Holy Spirit Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, includes an extended reflection by the pastor on the flag's symbolic significance. In addition to the usual meanings, you probably did not know that the thirteen stripes represent Jesus and the twelve at the first Eucharist; the six white stripes the six holy days of obligation; the seven red stripes the seven sacraments; the fifty stars the fifty Hail Marys in the Rosary; and on and on. The pastor concludes, "When I think about God and the faith, I suppose I will, in a unique sort of way, think as well about our country, our freedom, and our flag." One might entertain the possibility that in his case the spiritual antidote to the sacrilege of patriotic kitsch might be to do something rude to the flag.

■ Herewith, somewhat belatedly, an acknowledgment of the death last February of Nathan Wright, Jr., at age eighty-one. Few will recognize the name today, but in the riotous 1960s he was a figure of considerable note. An Episcopal minister and author of *Black Power and Urban Unrest*, in 1967 he chaired the National Conference on Black Power in Newark, New Jersey, which proposed dividing the United States into two countries, one black and one white. While he was not a racial separatist, he thought the goal of racial integration an insult because it assumed blacks could not have a life except in association with whites. He was a radical of self-reliance, insisting that to start a business is more important than running a soup kitchen, and to learn a skill more important than increasing welfare benefits. I remember him as a gentle man of scholarly demeanor who did not fit into any of the designated categories of racial politics in America, then or now. Nathan Wright, Jr., *requiescat in pace*.

■ "There are many things to debate about the Holocaust, but whether it happened is not one of them," says Deborah Lipstadt who wrote a book about her trial in a British court when historian David Irving sued her for calling him a Holocaust denier. The court ruled in Prof. Lipstadt's favor. The above comment, in a column she published in the *New York Sun*, was occasioned by her outrage at C-Span for airing a discussion with Irving. Lipstadt writes, "Holocaust deniers and, for that matter, most prejudiced people are wretched types who are no more important than the dirt we step in on the street. We must, however, clean it off our feet before we drag it into our homes." They do not rise to

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the status of "subhuman," they are not even "vermin," they are no more important than the dirt we step in on the street. Is Deborah Lipstadt, a student of the Holocaust, capable of hearing herself? There are many things to say about the Holocaust, but whether it is right to view human beings as dirt to be scraped off our feet is not one of them.

■ Hillel Halkin is a regular contributor to, among other publications, *Commentary* and the *New York Sun*. He writes in the latter about anti-Semitic remarks by Ken Livingston, the mayor of London. In order to understand such views, Halkin says, "One has to go to the very roots of Christianity. Jesus, a Jew in every fiber of his being, was killed by the Roman rulers of Palestine. What did a Christianized Roman Empire do with that fact? It turned Jesus' murderers into his own people, forever accursed on account of it. Such a people deserved the worst, even annihilation. This is the deepest, most instinctive of 'moves' in regard to the Jewish people.... It's what Christianity has done for 2,000 years.... Perhaps, consciously, London's mayor is really not an anti-Semite. Unconsciously, he is a violent one, in the best Christian tradition." The ignorance is appalling, the venom is breathtaking. A murderous hatred of Jews, Mr. Halkin tells us, is in the best Christian tradition. It would seem to follow that, the better Christians we are, the more we will hate Jews. Bigots such as Hillel Halkin do not make it easy to be, by that definition, a very bad Christian.

■ One notes with interest a certain change of tone over at *America*, the Jesuit weekly, since Fr. Thomas Reese departed. The editorial voice has assumed an authoritative, decisive, peremptory, even sovereign style. For instance, an editorial on the importance of unity in the labor movement ends with this: "The current dispute within the AFL-CIO is an unfortunate move in the opposite direction. Unions can be powerful advocates for poor workers. Let the unions' internal divisions be resolved." What's next? "Let the world be at peace." "Let all partisan bickering cease." Yes *sir*!

■ I believe I mentioned that, under pressure from the hyper-sensitive ACLU, the board of supervisors of Los Angeles County removed the very small cross from the county seal. They feared the imposition of attorney fees by a judge under the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 1988. The ACLU did not object to the very large figure of Pomona on the seal. That may have something to do with Pomona being the Roman goddess of fruits and nuts. Nonetheless, the board replaced Pomona with what appears to be an American Indian woman. Where the cross used to be, there is a representation of the San Gabriel Mission. Except that the cross atop the mission has been airbrushed. Such are the antics mandated by what the ACLU interprets as the cultural sterility clause of the First Amendment. (The foregoing was brought to my attention by Rees Lloyd, a California civil rights attorney who was recently honored as "Legionnaire of the Year" by the American Legion for his work in the effort to preserve the cultural recognizability of the country for which its members fought.)

■ It is true that I don't have much to say about liturgy in this space. It is not for lack of interest. Liturgical renewal has been an abiding concern. As a young Lutheran pastor, I edited a scholarly quarterly, *Una Sancta*, dealing with liturgy and ecumenism. At that time I was also the token Protestant on the board of the National Liturgical Conference, an organization that sponsored Liturgical Weeks that regularly drew tens of thousands of people from around the country and played, I believe, a constructive role until it got caught up in the counter-cultural excitements of the period and finally went down in flames. In a forthcoming work from Basic Books, *Catholic Matters: Confusion, Controversy, and the Splendor of Truth*, I discuss, among many other things, the derailment of the liturgical movement in the decades following the Council. So it is not lack of interest but lack of space that explains the limited attention to matters liturgical. For Catholic readers who want to keep up on what, for better and worse, is happening on this front, I recommend *Adoremus Bulletin*, published by the Society for the Renewal of Sacred Liturgy and edited by Helen Hull Hitchcock. (Adoremus, PO Box 300561, St. Louis, Missouri 63130. *www.adoremus.org*.)

■ The usual thing is not to give away the end of a book lest you spoil the suspense of where a story or argument is going. In the case of *Europeana: A Brief History of the Twentieth Century* by Czech writer Patrik Ourednik, however, the ending serves as an excellent introduction. So here it is: "And in 1989, an American political scientist invented a theory about the end of history, according to which history had actually come to an end, because modern science and new means of communication allowed people to live in prosperity, and universal prosperity was the guarantee of democracy and not the contrary as the Enlightenment philosophers and Humanists had once believed. And citizens were actually consumers and consumers were also citizens and all forms of society evolved toward liberal democracy and liberal democracy would in turn lead to the demise of all authoritarian forms of government and to political and economic freedom and equal-

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ity and a new age in human history, but it would no longer be historical. But lots of people did not know the theory and continued to make history as if nothing had happened." *Europeana* is a little book of only 122 pages and is published by the somewhat-obscure Dalkey Archive Press associated with Illinois State University. It has been a while since I've read anything that so fascinates, chills, and amuses all at the same time. In a tone that is laconic, laid back, and intelligently bemused, Ourednik offers a merciless account of the achievements and madnesses—but mostly the madnesses—of the century past: the wars, the utopian delusions, the concentration camps, the political ideologies, the technological advances, and the wacky philosophical pretensions of the brightest and best all receive the attention of a disinterested but curious narrator who can hardly believe what these human beings will be up to next. A leitmotif is the craziness throughout of those who labor to deny God, which is matched only by those who are very sure of His purposes in every particular. *Europeana* is not for every taste but, at the risk of exposing my quirkiness, I found it both sobering and delightful, and powerfully so on both scores. The thing that kept coming to mind was the great Dr. Johnson's injunction, "clear your mind of cant." Patrik Ourednik has a mind cleared of cant.

■ In the 1960s, Richard Hofstadter wrote about "the paranoid style in American politics." He had wacky right-wingers in mind but, as has been observed, the paranoid style has now gravitated to the left. A fine example is Garry Wills' recent and very long article in the *New York Review of Books* explaining how a few of my friends and I have established a "fringe government" by working with both the Vatican and the White House in a nefarious conspiracy to disenfranchise the great American mainstream represented by, of course, Garry Wills. I may come back to Mr. Wills' article in the months ahead. I understand that there are in the works other articles, plus a book or two, advancing the same thesis. A professor tells me that his Jewish colleague read the Wills article, put it down, and exclaimed with some amazement, "That's how they used to talk about us." There's something to that. It does little good for me to say that, if my friends and I had only a small part of the influence that Mr. Wills says we have, we would have many times the influence we have. To that the conspiratorially-minded have a ready response: "He would say that, wouldn't he?" Thus is the conspiracy theory further confirmed. As Wills puts it, "[Neuhaus speaks] with a quiet air of reasonableness which just makes his extremism more effective." As Hofstadter observed, they get you coming and going. (I do appreciate the generosity of David Levine, the review's legendary cartoonist, in restoring some of my long lost hair.)

■ In response to his contemptuously dismissive depiction of evangelical Protestants in the *New York Times* book-review section, I expressed skepticism about whether Mark Lilla of the University of Chicago actually knew any evangelicals (August/September). In the September 18 issue of the *Times*' Sunday magazine, there appears, as though in response, "Getting Religion: My Long-Lost Years as a Teenage Evangelical," by Mark Lilla. He tells how, as an unhappy teenager in a nonobservant blue-collar Catholic family in Detroit, he discovered the Bible, was born again, and was for seven years a thoroughly obnoxious "religious fanatic." Evangelicalism as he knew it was a matter of getting together with like-minded friends and searching the Bible to come up with a do-it-yourself Christianity. His experience was untouched by the Christian intellectual tradition. "A half-century ago, an American Christian seeking assistance could have turned to the popularizing works of serious religious thinkers like Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, John Courtney Murray, Thomas Merton, [and] Jacques Maritain. . . . But intellectual figures like these have disappeared from the American landscape and have been replaced by half-educated evangelical gurus who either publish vacant, cheery, self-help books or are politically motivated. If an evangelical wants to satisfy his taste for truth today, it's strictly self-service." Well, not quite. There are, for instance, writers such as Alan Jacobs, Alister McGrath, Mark Noll, Timothy George, Wilfred McClay, and quite a few others I could name, most of whom appear with some regularity in the pages of FT or in the evangelical publication *Books & Culture*. There is no doubt a powerful streak of anti-intellectualism in American evangelicalism, but Lilla's experience, as he tells it, is hardly representative. So I think I'll stand by most of what I said in my original comment. Lilla now calls himself a skeptic. There is a nice touch toward the end of his article. Recently Lilla encountered a young man filled with the fervor reminiscent of his own youthful days. "I felt a professorial lecture welling up in my throat about the history and psychology of religion. I wanted to expose him to the pastiche of the biblical text, the syncretic nature of Christian doctrine, the church's ambiguous role as incubator and stifler of human knowledge, the theological idiosyncrasy of American evangelicalism. I wanted to warn him against the anti-intellectualism of American religion today and the political abuses to which it is subject. I wanted to cast doubt on the step he was about to take, to help him see there are other ways to live, other ways to seek knowledge, love, perhaps even self-transformation. I

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wanted to convince him that his dignity depended on maintaining a free, skeptical attitude toward doctrine. I wanted . . . to save him. I thought I was out of that business, but maybe not."

■ On the same day, the *Times* carried an essay by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Forgetting Reinhold Niebuhr." Much of it is what he said at the Princeton meeting last fall marking the twentieth anniversary of my book, *The Naked Public Square*. Schlesinger has long been a member of the club that philosopher Morton White dubbed "Atheists for Niebuhr." Along with the conventional whacks at George W. Bush and the pope, Schlesinger's chief complaint is that there are no religious thinkers today like Niebuhr with whom atheists can happily get along. Now, as it happens, I have for many years contended, contra the likes of Schlesinger as well as some Christian critics, that Reinhold Niebuhr was much more of a Christian than they want to believe. I first met Niebuhr when I was a very young man, and he said, "I'm told you're the next Reinhold Niebuhr." By any measure, that turned out not to be the case. Although I do not protest when I'm accused of having a Niebuhrian sensibility, and sometimes it is meant as a compliment. I prefer to describe it as an Augustinian sensibility, marked by an abiding awareness of the fallenness of our human circumstance, the ambiguities that surround and the ironies that confound our prideful certitudes, and our radical dependence upon the grace of God. Atheists for Niebuhr, such as Arthur Schlesinger, read Niebuhr, if they read him at all, very selectively. They celebrated him because he lent a patina of intellectual and religious prestige to their liberal causes, and Niebuhr can be criticized for so readily letting himself be used for their ends. Which is not unrelated to the fact that their political ends were, for the most part, also his. Garry Wills, Mark Lilla, Arthur Schlesinger: all three appeared within a few days of each other. Religion is certainly getting more attention. The dominant themes, however, are miscreant Catholics and mindless evangelicals; the former being smart but sinister and the latter dumb but at least equally dangerous. The prospect of the two working in concert is the stuff of liberal nightmares. These three and similar articles have a common purpose: to warn the enlightened reader against the dangers posed by religion today, and especially by religion in public. It would appear that Garry Wills and Arthur Schlesinger are no longer capable of thinking anew about the very different religious, cultural, and political circumstance that so alarms them. But maybe I'm wrong about that.

■ "Religious activists fool themselves if they believe public displays of the Ten Commandments reflect a more moral and less corrupt nation. One needs only to watch television to discern the level of our depravity." That's Cal Thomas whose column, he says, runs neck and neck with George Will's as the country's most widely syndicated. Thomas got it wrong: It's not so much a matter of reflection as of aspiration. I don't know if anybody thinks displaying the Ten Commandments will "reflect" a more moral nation, but it may indicate that the we as a people aspire to being less corrupt. And it's far from evident why schlock on television should be taken as the measure of the country's moral vitality or lack thereof. The Bible, says Thomas, does not teach "that God needs the state to promote himself and that such promotion should be visible." Of course not. The notion that God "needs" anything contradicts the biblical understanding of the being of God. Why is it that Cal Thomas sounds so very much like Barry Lynn of Americans United for a Naked Public Square? Both suggest that permitting the free exercise of religion in public is a favor granted to the religiously fixated or, even, a favor granted to God. The same problem is evident in the otherwise eminently sensible comment on the Ten Commandment cases by George Will. He writes: "Nowadays many people delight in being distressed. They cultivate exquisitely tender sensibilities and practice moral exhibitionism, waxing indignant about minor encounters with thoughts and symbols they dislike. *So, just to lower the decibel level of American life, perhaps communities should refrain from religious displays other than in religious contexts.* But this is a merely prudential, not a constitutional consideration. The justices churned out 140 pages of opinions and dissents about the Texas and Kentucky displays. Here is a one-sentence opinion that should suffice in such cases: 'Because the display on public grounds does not do what the establishment clause was written to prevent—does not impose a state-sponsored creed or significantly advantage or disadvantage one sect or sects—the display is constitutional.'" The problem is with the sentence I have italicized above. No doubt some proponents of multiplying religious symbols in public spaces are motivated by a desire to score points in the culture wars. Prudence and civility suggest they should restrain themselves. The Ten Commandments should not be demeaned by being turned into a political slogan. Both Thomas and Will fail to understand the crucial issue in these court cases, however. As admirably argued by Justice Antonin Scalia—writing in dissent and marshalling massive evidence from the founding era up through recent times—the purpose of the Ten Commandments and related symbols in public is to bear witness *as a nation* to the constituting truths of this constitutional order. In direct contradiction of the explicit statements

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of the founders, the Declaration of Independence, multiple acts of Congress, and the repeated assertions of presidents from Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson, both Roosevelts, and up through the present, the Supreme Court declared in 1968 that the government must be "neutral" between religions and between religion and non-religion. That the government cannot favor religion, Scalia says, is simply false. He is right about that, as he is right in saying that an unprincipled majority on the Court does not strike down the pledge's "one nation under God" and the national motto "In God We Trust" only because they know it would be a fatal blow to the gravely weakened credibility of a judicial "dictatorship" increasingly marked by "hostility to religion." Contra Thomas, Lynn, Will, and many others, the public display of the truths by which this order is constituted is not a favor granted to those who have a thing about religion, and certainly not a favor to God. These truths are publicly displayed and revered because they continue to be essential to what Lincoln called the testing of "whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure." They reflect who we as a people are and who we aspire to be. "We hold these truths" because without them this legal and political order makes no sense, and, most importantly, because they are true. We as a nation have never been and are not now "neutral" about these truths. The majority opinion prohibiting their official affirmation combines historical ignorance and judicial arrogance in a way that justly brings the Court into deeper disrepute.

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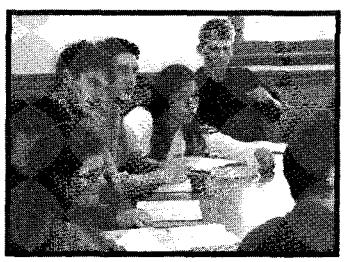

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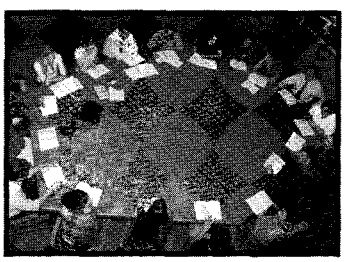

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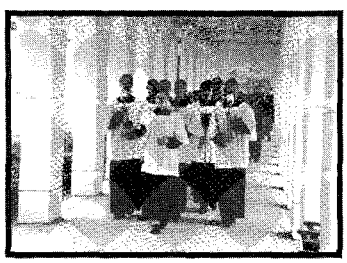

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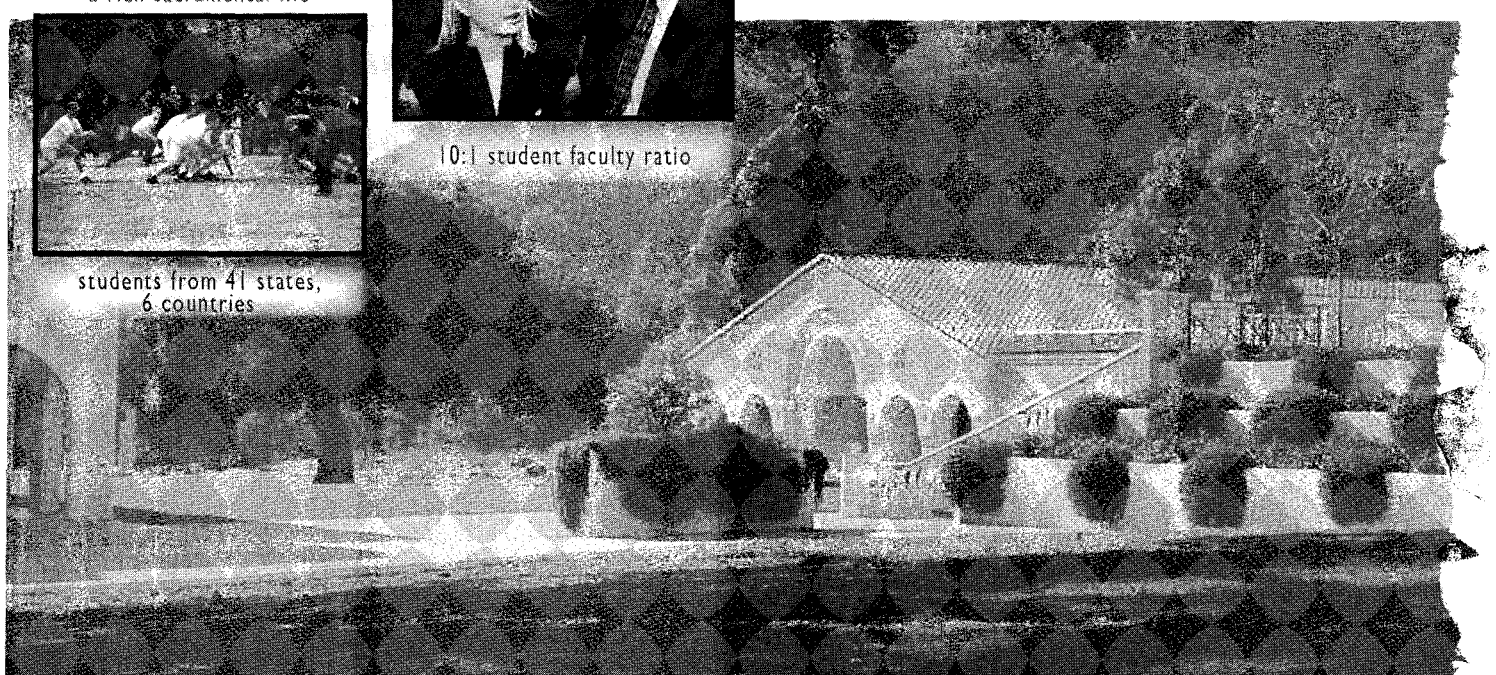

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